

Glimpses of the colonial society and the life at Princeton College 1766–1773 by one of the Class of 1763

GLIMPSES OF COLONIAL SOCIETY and the Life at PRINCETON COLLEGE

1766–1773

By W. Jay Mills

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GLIMPSES of COLONIAL SOCIETY AND THE LIFE AT Princeton College 1766–1773 by
One of the Class OF 1763

Paterson, William

Edited by W. JAY MILLS AUTHOR OF “HISTORIC HOUSES OF NEW JERSEY,”
“THROUGH THE GATES OF OLD ROMANCE,” ETC.

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To All Lovers of PRINCETON UNIVERSITY And its Illustrious Past This Book is Dedicated
in Memory of WILLIAM PATERSON, 3 d

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INTRODUCTION

THE following papers belonged to William Paterson,—a graduate of the College of New Jersey in 1763,—who succeeded the famous William Livingston as governor of New Jersey. The latter part of the eighteenth century saw no more brilliant figure than that of this youth, whose name deserves to rank high on the honor roll of illustrious Americans. Attorney-general of New Jersey during the Revolution, a framer of the Federal Constitution, senator of the United States from New Jersey, governor of the State, and at the time of his death an associate justice of the Supreme Court of the United States, his life was one of remarkable achievement. Until a few years ago most of his correspondence was carefully preserved, and in his great oaken letter-chest one could find almost a complete record of his life from youth to old age: Essays prepared at the College of New Jersey in 1760; poems written 14 on portions of old law-briefs, bearing dates when he served as a law-apprentice to Richard Stockton; his earliest and last love-epistles to Cornelia Bell, the fair Jersey girl who became his wife; packets of letters from a host of faithful friends, together with a tear-stained copy of the order for his tomb-stone.

William Paterson was born in County Antrim, Ireland, December 24, 1745. Shortly after his birth his parents emigrated to the New World, and for a period of about three years wandered here and there through the colonies before adopting a fixed abode. In the Paterson papers we find it recorded that they journeyed to the hamlet of Princetown in the spring-time of 1750, and becoming so enamoured with the place, purchased one hundred acres of land in the centre of the settlement for a permanent home. Six years after the

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family became residents of this isolated spot on the King's Highway connecting New York City and Philadelphia, President Burr of the young College of New Jersey removed his students from Newark to Princeton,—to shield them from the temptations and allurements of the nearby city of New York.

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William Paterson was matriculated in that institution in 1759 or 1760, receiving the degree of A.B. on September 27, 1763. Of his class—numbering nineteen graduates—twelve became ministers. As family tradition points to the fact that in his studies he was the most successful of that little band in college, so his subsequent career far eclipsed that of any of his fellow-students. With the exception of Tapping Reeve, who married the daughter of President Burr and afterwards acquired fame as an eminent Connecticut jurist, his latter life compared to theirs was like a star amidst an assembly of candle-lights. A youth of obscure parentage who by his industry and self-denial fitted himself to receive the highest honors of his State, he deserves one of the laurel-strewn places in the history of the early republic.

Standing before Nassau Hall to-day—once the most stately college-building in America—the mind grows retrospective. Drinking in that mystical, intangible something which seems to hallow its ancient walls, our imaginations lead us back to the Princeton of William Paterson's time,—a Princeton less flourishing than that which welcomed the tidings of the Revolution ten years later. The trees on the campus were then only young saplings. On the main thoroughfare there reposed a tavern, a general store, and several small tinkers' shops. Among the travelled gentry of the time the village was quite noted for its silver-smiths, over one of whose doors hung the sign of Elias Boudinot, the father of Mrs. Richard Stockton, and nearby a member of the Paterson family followed the same trade. There the students loitered during recesses, running to meet the “Flying Wagons,” as the great coaches from New York were called.

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A hundred and fifty years have worked a great transition in Princeton College life. When William Paterson was a fourteen-year-old freshman the students were obliged to attend their classes in a style of dress prescribed by President Davies. Every youth during his first days at college was set to copying the long parchment of laws. Fines were imposed for absence from church or prayers. No student was permitted to keep his head covered within ten rods of the president and five rods of the tutors. Something of the formal, old-time 17 collegiate manners can be learned from the fact that Samuel Stanhope Smith, when president, refused to speak to his own nephew for a period of six months, owing to the unfortunate young man's breach of etiquette in calling him "Doctor," instead of "Doctor Smith." The college course itself was not as extensive as the present curriculum of the average high school, and lapses in spelling and grammar are to be found in the letters of the faculty as well as of the students.

Two years after leaving college, and still residing at his father's house in Princeton, William Paterson aided Robert Ogden, Luther Martin, Oliver Ellsworth, and Tapping Reeve in the formation of The Well-Meaning Club. The Stamp Act had just been passed by the British Parliament, and this forerunner of the Cliosophic Society could be said to be the outcome of the sentiment of patriotism.

In the year 1770 The Well-Meaning Club was reorganized under the name of the Cliosophic Society. Paterson was then living at New Bromley, Hunterdon County, New Jersey, but on his frequent visits to his home he acted as an *amicus curiæ* to the new organization of young *literati*. Under the name of "Lucius, The Occasional Reader," he wrote many poems for the little band of students which held its first meetings in one of the upper rooms of Nassau Hall. There he would resort of an evening when the candles were snuffed in the busy Stockton office, where he usually spent the daytime. We can picture him to ourselves standing in the centre of the floor, a slight, animated figure, reading his quaint "Belle of Princeton" to a jolly crowd of bewigged and beruffled students. Many laughs of appreciation must have been accorded to his witty innuendoes, aimed at the

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bugbears of their lives. "Mark the conduct of this tutor, the Iyer Smith!" we hear his ardent voice ring out. With what derision his hearers listen to his recital of the actions of the detested Smith during a recent fire in a house near the college. Soon the society is in an uproar. "Great Paterson! We will leave it at his door in the morning," some daring spirit no doubt called out. Then, as the mirth grows louder, the stentorian tones of the Doctor fall upon the company, with his "To bed! To bed!"

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"Lucius" was the pseudonym adopted by Richard Stockton in his charming correspondence with his wife; and it is a remarkable coincidence that both student and master should have used the same *nom de guerre*. Although Richard Stockton is credited with having given voice to the remark that Mr. Paterson was so "industrious he would some day be an honor to his profession," it is refreshing to know that he sometimes turned from his dull Blackstone to consort with Calliope. Old law-briefs still retain two of his early poems. On a deed giving John Moses possession of a tract of land are the following pastoral verses:

"How sweet to listen to a purling stream Whose falling waters lull me in a dream. How sweet to read, and if the fit should take To court the muses by a sunny brake. How soothing sad to hear yon turtle-dove Deplore the loss untimely of her love.

"How plaintively, and oft, she mourns the fate Of her too tim'rous and unhappy mate. Hark! Now! the little warblers tune their throats, Welcoming the morning with their notes.

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The mingled melody from every spray Compiles to add new lustre to the day. All one, and all, doth in the chorus join. Pleasure how sweet, and concert how divine."

On a portion of an old letter we find some unfinished verses addressed "To Sally," which the youth may have hidden in a musty tome as some stern and pompous client entered the Stockton office.

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“Hail, beauteous maid! thy charms inspire Old age with transports and unwonted fire.
Roving and young, the pride of every Heart, Nature sure form'd thee with her utmost art.
E'en Nassau's sons, so dazzling bright thy eye, Revere in silence, and in silence die.

“Sally, of thee I sing: the belle, the toast! Aurora's self not half thy charms can boast; Lofty
thy look and graceful is thy mien. Love, God of raptures, in each feature's seen. You *****”

William Paterson was the popular man of his class in college, and during a period of ten years after graduation he retained an active interest in his 21 *alma mater*. He was the friend and idol of many a struggling youth, his character being singularly warm-hearted and lovable. For Aaron Burr he conceived a remarkable attachment, lasting until death. That merry youth did not hesitate to accept his aid with his essays, and the Burr exercise on dancing, published in Mr. Davis's “Memoirs of Aaron Burr,” was in reality the work of his friend William Paterson.

Among the pleasantest features of college life are the friendships formed there. The fraternal feeling engendered and fostered by mingling in a large company of young men of like age and purpose is generally proof against the world's strongest vicissitudes met with in later years. No young man ever turns his back upon the college where he has passed the time which carried him over the bridge of youth to manhood without learning something of the meaning of universal brotherhood. A friendship formed at the College of New Jersey was that of William Paterson and John Macpherson, Jr., who was graduated three years later, in 1766. These two youths could be compared to Nisus and Euryalus, although one 22 lived on long after the other had been pierced by steel as cruel as that of the Volscian horsemen. It is impossible to read the series of letters written by William Paterson to the college-mate he loved so devotedly, without being touched by the perfect picture of affection they disclose. John Macpherson was the eldest son of Captain John Macpherson, the builder of Mount Pleasant, the mansion where Benedict Arnold entertained so lavishly after his marriage to Miss Shippen. The Macpherson family was one of the most prominent in Pennsylvania, and young Macpherson enjoyed all the

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advantages wealth and position could bestow. This makes the attachment of the two friends all the more remarkable. They corresponded with each other for a period of seven years. The last letter was written by William Paterson, at Raritan, New Jersey, September 15, 1773, and contains characteristic raillery on Macpherson's passion for Miss Rebecca Redman. That fair belle of old Philadelphia could not have returned John Macpherson's love, or else must have been a heartless coquette, for she flits through the recorded pages of the Quaker city's society as 23 one of the most frivolous figures during Sir William Howe's *régime*. Two years after Paterson penned his last words to his friend—"Do, dear Miss (Miss Redman), suffer your adoring swain to take a ramble into the country for a few days"—the cruel drama of the Revolution was on, and Major John Macpherson had fallen by the side of his chief, General Richard Montgomery, in the assault on Quebec. Of him the historian Bancroft wrote: "In the pathway lay Macpherson, the pure-minded, youthful enthusiast for liberty, as spotless as the new-fallen snow which was his winding-sheet; full of promise for war, lovely in temper, dear to the army, honored by the affection and confidence of his chief."

It is hoped that the Paterson papers will reach all true lovers of our past. As a portrayal of New Jersey colonial life by the pen of a Princeton alumnus they are unique. As a record of the college friendship of two famous Americans the twenty-three letters from William Paterson to John Macpherson are unrivalled.

The earliest exercise of the famous Cliosophic Society preserved at Princeton University bears the 24 date July 2, 1792. William Paterson's "Belle of Princeton" was written twenty years before this time, during one of the most interesting periods of American history. Princeton should be proud of her famous son. His devotion to his college was remarkable, and was kept up until the close of an active life. Side by side with his great achievements for his State and the federal government we will place his long-hidden records of early Princeton life. During his last days, in the fall-time of thoughts were often with his college.

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His path in life had led him to the altitudes and surrounded him with friends, but Princeton and the long-lost college-mate John Macpherson were his dearest memories.

W. Jay Mills.

February, 1903

PART I A SERIES OF LETTERS giving much entertaining knowledge of Colonial Life

Written by WILLIAM PATERSON

TO John Macpherson, J R .

1766–1773

“So word by word, and line by line, The dead man touch'd me from the past, And all at once it seem'd at last His living soul was flash'd on mine.”

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LETTER I *Contains Pertinent Reflections on the Study of Law*

31st Decr Dear Johnny. 1766.

I AM very much obliged for your half dozen lines, as they serve to usher in an epistolary correspondence. A conversing on paper with an absent friend I esteem one of the greatest pleasures in life: be assured then, dear Johnny, that I shall take peculiar pleasure in receiving and answering your letters. The only unease [sic in the copy] I feel at present is, that I'm apprehensive our literary chit-tat will be of short duration, for you inform me, that in a few days you should move to Philadelphia, to study law.¹ If so, it is highly probable you either will be so absorbed in the dulness of the law, or so enchanted with some Dulcinea, that poor pilgarlic will be left in the lurch. For my part I am tired heartier “of Vernon

¹ A week before this letter was written William Paterson reached his majority.

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28 and ventris and all the damned entries.” To be a complete lawyer, is to be versed in the feudal system, and to say the truth, I am not very fond of being entangled in the cobwebs of antiquity. *Sic Lex est*, is what every plodding pettifogger can say, but to dive into the spirit, requires intense application and assiduity. But of all the sages of the law, preserve me from the pedantic, rambling, helter-skelter Master Coke. Such eternal egotism and dictatorial pomp breathe through his works, that I lose all patience in reading them. He writes up strictly to the injunction of Horace, for he carries us “to Thebes, to Athens, and the Lord knows where”—I doubt not but you have made great proficiency, and now are, a profound casuist in working out distinctions without a difference, in clouding truth with ambiguity, and in mouthing with surprising volubility, a muster role of law phrases, which like Sancho Panza's string of proverbs, you have always at command. The following couplet of Pope, portrays well the character of an expert lawyer. In a nice balance, truth with gold he weighs, And solid pudding against empty praise. My letter is of decent length, therefore adieu.

Wm Paterson.

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LETTER II *Contains* References to Samuel Greville, a Philadelphia actor

Princeton 26th January 1767.

DR SIR: Capt Walcott handed me your letter, from the bulk of which, I pleased myself with the hope of great entertainment, but *parturunt montes, nascitur ridiculus mus*. The bulky outside covered some pigmy lines, about an inch apart, and any thing, good lord, to fill up half a side. Pray, Dr Jack, for once exercise your invention, and let the fruits thereof appear in goodly quantity in your next. Write often, and as often as you write, say a great deal. The fact is however, you are so confoundedly lazy, it is almost impossible for you to put pen to paper, and when you do, you begin and end in the same breath. Your first letter apologised for shortness, because you were out of the way of news, but when

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you went to Philadelphia, 30 a place teeming with newsmongers, you were to be more entertaining. But never a barrel better herring: both letters were equally short, and alike deficient in news. I live in a little country village where incidents worth communicating are scarce. If any ever happen, my letters are at treble the length of yours. Poor Greville,¹ what a noble subject on which to moralize, "in truth 'tis pitiful, most wondrous pitiful." Sam's fate reached Princeton long ago, before he appeared on the stage. You might have been more particular, and informed me what induced him to take that unhappy course. Was it because his finances were reduced to low ebb, or was he smitten by an actress, as is not uncommon? I hear he plead poverty, in order to obviate which, some gentlemen offered to sustain him, during his continuance with Galloway. Perhaps his high spirit could not brook that. I am Dr Sir Etc. Wm Paterson.

¹ Samuel Greville was an actor of some prominence in Philadelphia. He studied a year or two at the College of New Jersey, but was never graduated.

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LETTER III *Contains a Picture of Perfect Friendship*

May 11th, 1767.

WHETHER it is the whisper of the Guardian Angel or the freaks of a disordered imagination, I cannot say, but for some time past, I have been pained with forebodings of your being sick, and which in spite of my efforts, haunt me wherever I go. Some unfortunate incident has occurred, some unforeseen affliction happened, or my friend would have written. He knows I love him, he knows I am pleased to hear of his good fortune, he knows I am delighted to correspond with him, why then is he so remiss in answering my last letter? He used to be speedy, and never till now has he delayed so long. Now three months have intervened since I wrote, and four since I have received a letter. Judge Dr Sir, if I have not just ground to be uneasy. No life is so irksome, so ³² racking as a life of suspense; pray therefore, write by the first opportunity. But perhaps

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Martin, by whom I sent my last letter, has neglected to deliver it, though I am convinced he meant to call on you on his way. Perhaps you were not at home, and if so, Martin would have left the letter with your fellow-clerk, Rush, or some other of his acquaintance, so that there was little probability of its miscarrying. Strong in the belief that you must have received it, I have designed more than once to maul you for neglect, but the fear of your being sick, or of the missal failing to reach you, always bridled my pen. We are very ingenious in finding excuses for persons we love: we lay hold of every straw, and catch at every surmise however fanciful, to alleviate whatever may appear either a slight neglect. The pleasure I took in receiving and answering your letters, and the hope that our correspondence would be lasting, heightened the fear of that coming to an end so soon. But perhaps you keep so closely to your studies, that you cannot spare a moment for writing to a friend. I hinted in my first letter, that our correspondence would not continue for any long time, as I feared ³³ you would be immersed too deeply in the law, to perform your part of the engagement. But has Law such a Lethe as to make its students forgetful of its friends? I hope not. If it has, I shall bid adieu immediately, to a study so unsocial. I am, Dr Sir Etc.

Wm Paterson.

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LETTER IV *Contains a Description of Jacob Rush, of Philadelphia*

May 21st, 1767.

YOUR kind letter, Dr Jack, proved doubly welcome, for not only did it remove my apprehensions concerning your health, but also convinced me fully that I had a warm place in your affections. I regret your late letter has not come to hand.¹ Burt lodged with me while in town, and as he told me he had been in Philadelphia, I was very inquisitive, and almost stunned him with questions. Among other things, he informed me particularly

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concerning the circumstances of Sam Greville, and gave me a more adequate idea of the merit of the respective actors, than I had before. What sort

1 In 1767 Trenton was the nearest post-office to Princeton, and letters frequently went astray. A letter was advertised there in 1755 directed to Richard Paterson, Princeton.

35 of performance is the play, which was written by a Son of Philadelphia College, and which, if I mistake not, has been introduced lately on the stage?¹ I heard it read a few days ago, in a cursory way, but was not able to form a judgment on its worth: I think however, that the author has misnamed it: had it been baptised a comico-farcical dramatic piece, it would have been more consonant to the general scope. It was represented but once, if I can trust my memory, which is tantamount to being damned. Do you know who wrote the prologue and epilogue? The first is good enough for the play, but the other is the most despicable that ever appeared in print. I used to curse anathematise the poetical conundrums, epigrams, squibs, etc., of our Nassovian Bards. But I find they make as good musick as their neighbors: whether they have more common sense, is a moot point. *Nunc est formosissimus omnis*. Pray, Jack, try if you can spend a few days in the country. I mean here at Princeton. I can offer no greater inducement than seeing your friends, and among

1 This play was "The Disappointment," acted in Philadelphia in May, 1767.

36 the rest, your very humble servant. Mr Dickinson, I dare say, can dispense with your attendance for a week or so, especially as he has such a number of clerks. You will please to present my very best compliments to Master Rush.¹ I desire to keep on amicable terms at least with that gentleman, for you know he is to be the Speaker of the Hon. House of Commons. For my part, I think he bids fair to fill a large two armed chair, as Sergeant tells me he is at least two feet more globular than he was twelve months ago. I am, Dr Sir, yours very sincerely

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1 Jacob Rush was a brother of Dr. Benjamin Rush. He was graduated from the College of New Jersey in 1765. On commencement day he pronounced an oration on Liberty. He entered the profession of the law, and became chief justice of Pennsylvania.

Wm Paterson.

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LETTER V *Contains Charming Gossip of the Times*

Monday Night, almost 12 o'clock, July 20th 1767.

DR SIR: I sent you a few days ago, a large packet, delivered to a very trusty person. So set the letters to Boyd and Martin afloat as soon as possible. Yesterday morning, Mr. Stockton returned,¹ and the most material piece of news he has communicated yet, is that Dr Witherspoon has refused, absolutely, to accept of the Presidency. There is such a crowd of visitants to welcome him, that it is impossible almost to obtain any satisfactory information concerning political affairs. I should write more but am too fatigued from a pleasure ride to Trenton.² The company was agreeable, but

1 After the return of Mr. Stockton, Rev. Samuel Blair, the youthful divine, was chosen president by the trustees. He recalled his acceptance on an intimation of a change of mind on the part of Dr. Witherspoon.

2 The pleasure excursion referred to was a straw-ride.

38 the rattling and jolting of the waggon, were sufficient in all conscience, to mortify a person of such a silent turn as your friend, and then it rained besides on our return. For the future I'm resolved to bid adieu to roving, and continue within the smoke of Princeton, since such ill-hap awaits my rambling. And yet on my conscience, I believe I would go again to morrow, could I go with the same company. But glad I am that such inviting company rarely occurs. You may perceive that I write with my usual freedom, though complaining of fatigue. This difficulty requires to be solved. Attend. The girls have been

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teasing me about being in love, and in fair truth, the young lady, my Amanda, is so very handsome, that it was easy to believe it myself. It gives me great pleasure, when I am said to be in love with sense and beauty, because it is an indirect way of paying a compliment. Alas poor Thomson,¹ I have been so much employed, that I forgot the priest: it is neither polite or devout to put him in the rear. He was on trial at Cranberry some three weeks ago, and

¹ James Thomson, a tutor for eight years, from 1762 to 1770.

JOHN MACPHERSON From the oil-painting in possession of his great-niece, Mrs. Julia M. Washington Horner

39 gave us a preachment yesterday, in which he surpassed my expectations. His style was neat and simple, his matter well arranged, not at all flighty or vague. He was articulate and spirited, his accents just, and emphasis generally well laid. Of course he was not without failings. Who is? *Errare est humanum*. The Clock strikes Twelve. Adieu. Wm Paterson.

To Mr McPherson.

40

LETTER VI *Contains a Catechism on Lucy Lawrance, of Maidenhead, now Lawrenceville, and Miss Young, of Boston*

August 5th, 1767.

YOUR two letters of the 22d and 29th of July were handed to me by Elmendorff. Things are discussed best by method: begin we then with letter the first. This is soon answered. I am obliged to you for sending Martin's letter, and hope you made a hearty meal. Upon my faith Jack, I believe Epicurus is your Lord Coke. Now then for letter the second: this I foresee requires a long answer, and great attention, and in my eye, is the finest letter

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you ever wrote. Miss Lawrance¹ and Miss Young;² what magic there is in names! I have hugged [sic] and kissed this letter over and

1 Lucy and Nancy Lawrance were the daughters of a prominent resident of Maidenhead.

2 Miss Young was a visitor from Boston.

41 over again with as much pleasure and satisfaction as Tom Jones did his Sophia's Muff. While blessed with the company of such charming creatures, I neither "envy Jove his sunshine or his sky."

"Place me where never summer's breeze, Unbends the glebe or warms the trees,
Wherever lowering clouds appear, And angry Jove deforms the inclement year. Place me
beneath the burning ray, Where rolls the rapid car of day. Love and the nymph shall charm
my toils, The nymph who sweetly speaks and sweetly smiles."

What! You'll swear that I am over head and ears in love, and ready to run distracted. I hope not, for then I shall be in great danger of being a wit, if what Dryden says is true, "Sure madness nearly is to wit ally'd." A mere jingle of words, and that is all, without the least appearance of truth, and therefore not applicable to this case. Now for answers to your questions. "Poor Will! How does Lucy Lawrance do?" Why very well I hope. "Does not your heart go pit-a-pat at sight of her name?" Nay, as to that, I will not say positively, if there be such a thing as loving on hearsay, I ⁴² believe I do, for you must know I am so far from the happiness of being acquainted with her, that I have never seen her, *propria persona*, tho' the night before your letter came, I had a most delightful dream about her, and my word for it, she looked as beautiful as an angel. Does not this remind you of Don Quixote's Dulcinea? "How often a day do you go to see her?" Not once: this is a pretty sort of catechism enough. "How many days do you stay at a time?" Not one: there now, I hope your curiosity is fully satisfied. You insist on knowing who went with me on the Trenton frolic. Let me say, Miss Young, Miss Lawrance, not Lucy, but Nancy, Miss Newell, Miss Norris, with a long et cetera. You mistook Nancy for Lucy, a slight error. You guessed

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however, amazingly well, considering you had nobody to assist you, but Miss Young and Miss Elmendorff. What a happy thing it is, my friend, you do not live in New England, for if you did, you would be tucked up most certainly for a wizard. What is Greville going to do? Pray tell me about him. My compliments to the boys.

I am yours sincerely, Wm Paterson.

43

LETTER VII *Contains a Dissertation on the Charms of Miss Rebecca Redman, of Philadelphia*

October 7th 1767.

VERY DR JOHNNY: An anxious concern for your safety, and a dread lest you pore over one delightful object, with too much ardor and closeness, induce me to write you so soon. Harken then to the instructions I impart, and give ear that you may be wise, so shall you shun the paths of the foolish, and walk in the way of understanding. Madness arises from too close an attention to a particular object, and therefore we should be careful not to pursue any thing, however alluring, with too much eagerness and intensity. Examples might be adduced, but you can recollect easily, many bright geniuses, who have lost their senses thus foolishly. 44 I fear lest my friend may add to their number. There is a variety of objects in a city like Philadelphia to draw attention, but I am more afraid of the effect of a single glance from Miss R—dm—n1 upon my friend, than all the fashionable amusements of the Town. But as you have lucid intervals still, I advise you to shun that particular attraction as much as possible, and to beware of her inviting smile. Never let your attention be fixed, but keep roving around. You told me when we talked this matter over, you are of an amorous complexion, and apt to slide imperceptibly into love. My opinion is you should fly to the country. Come to Princeton, and we will go to Mr Lawrance's, and every where else but Philadelphia. Distance may wear off the soft impression, and my friend thus recover his usual serenity and

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1 Rebecca Redman was a daughter of Dr. Thomas Redman, a prominent physician of Philadelphia. The Redmans played an important part in the social history of early Philadelphia. Becky Redman, as she was popularly called, was one of the belles of the "Meschianza." Major André was one of her admirers and addressed poetry to her. She married Colonel Elisha Lawrence, in December, 1779.

45 flow of spirits, unless he is so far gone that time will but make the impress more deep, like channels are worn in the brooks. I know from what you have said, you are beyond your depth. Your self captivity has given me great uneasiness since you informed me. I shall keep it under the rose. Rush has an admirable knack in dissecting love sick hearts. Apply to him, or if you would rather not let him into your secret self, be so good as to inform me, and I will cheerfully undertake the task. In order to divert your attention from Miss R—dm—n, I have inserted the following questions, which please communicate to Rush, and let me know your answers. A obtains Judgment against B, and issues Execution thereon, which the Sheriff returns thus: "I have levied on the goods of B to the value of £6 which remain etc." A vend. Exps. is ordered. B dies before the issuing of that. Will the decease of B preclude a Vend. Exps. from issuing immediately, or must a Sci. Fa. be issued? A sues B who prevails on C to be his Special Bail. C dies. What must be done? Can the Exr's of C take the same steps with respect to B, that C could if he were alive? Or must A demand better 46 bail of B? Or does not the death of C discharge his recognisance, and consequently his exr? When is heir a word of limitation, & when of purchase? I am Dr Johnny, yours etc

Wm Paterson.

47

LETTER VIII *Contains News of The College of New Jersey*

Sunday Afternoon:

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DR SIR: Your two letters of 16th of last month and 7th of this, came to hand much about the same time. Mr Boudinot,¹ to whom you committed the care of the first, neglected to leave it on his way through this place. It was eleven oclock at night when he came to Mr Stocktons, and he started early next morning, so that he is pretty excusable for his neglect. Had I known of this opportunity, I should have answered the questions you sent, which now must be deferred. Mr Scudder

1 Mr. Boudinot was Elias Boudinot, a brother of Mrs. Richard Stockton. He played an important part in the struggle for independence, and at the close of the war, as president of the first Continental Congress, signed the Treaty of Peace with Great Britain.

48 goes off too early to-morrow, and at this season of the year, I do not care to live up to the precept of the parent of his Colonial Excellency. Perhaps a peep at your Miss Nancy might be a strong inducement to look on sunrise these wintry mornings. Pray what sort of weather have you: here it is very severe, and ink almost freezes in the pen. The boys—his young brothers—tell me the skating is excellent: will this be any inducement to visiting Princeton. Pray contrive matters so as to make a Christmas—New Years Jaunt. Wither-spoon is President. Mercy on me! we shall be over-run with Scotchmen, the worst vermin under Heaven. Freshmanship is abolished. The officers of the College for the future, are to choose *all* the Orators. A Grammar-School is to be established in town, under the inspection of the Trustees. Each Tutor has an equal voice with the President, in the Government of the College, except when equally divided, then the President to have the turning Voice. I am Etc

Wm Paterson.

To Mr McPherson.

VERSE FROM AN ORIGINAL POEM WRITTEN BY WILLIAM PATERSON WHEN IN THE LAW OFFICE OF RICHARD STOCKTON, OF PRINCETON

LETTER IX *Contains Remarks on the Wedding of William Schenck*

DR JOHNNY “Your two letters of Sunday Afternoon and Decr 21, have lain unanswered so long, that I am ashamed almost to let you know I received them.” *Almost!* there's a word! Why Jack, you should be *quite* ashamed. But on second thoughts, I am at a loss whether to congratulate you, on being so virtuous in this sinful age as to preserve a little shame, or on your having shaken it off so nearly. For the first, I admire you most as a man, but as a lawyer, I admire you most for the second. To let shame have a place in the composition of a lawyer, or if a place, not to root it out, would degrade the venerable profession, and therefore, Jack, you and I should get rid of it as fast as we can. Dame Nature indeed, has woven it so in our frame, that generally, it requires 4 50 some time before we can wear it away, but this should make us more wary and active, lest with other habits and qualities of the kind, it should grow with our growth and strengthen with our strength. But I must quit moralising, a bad word Jack, but the first to come to hand. Now for your questions. In answer to No 1, I shall transcribe a case from Venirs Abrt, Customs of London Page 222, cited from Carter, 26 Pasch 1 Wand M in B. R. It was agreed by all that a foreign Attachment in London, is to compel an appearance of the Defendant; for if he appear in a year and a day, and puts in bail, the garnishee is discharged, but without bail, appearance will not be accepted. This is quoted also in 1 Bacon 689. So that the bare coming of A to London, is far from causing the Attachment to cease. There is no foreign attachment Act in this Province, and therefore it is a branch of knowledge little understood. By your sending the question, I conjecture it must be established in Pennsylvania.—The other answers are omitted.—As to Q 2 of mine, 1 Roll Abrt 931, cited in 2d Bacon 427, is against you directly: so is Cokes Jam 641 and 671. As to 51 your Q 3, you did not hit on my meaning, nor is it much wonder, for by the manner in which it was worded, I find I did not hit upon it myself. —You ask who is your Nancy? That is more than I can tell. I recollected, after sealing your letter, I had made a mistake in the name. Only say Nancy, *als dicto* Becky, and I dare say you will not plead misnomer. I can account for the slip only by supposing that every thing is Nancy with me, as it is Becky with you.—The Poem said to be wrote by J. Tennent, 1

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is called Oppression. Caleb Cooper who keeps a school at Brunswick, is the self same Caleb who used to be at College. Last Monday two weeks, Mr Wm Schenck,² formerly of Nassau Hall, Student, was married to the

1 J. Tennent was John Van Brugh Tennent, who founded the Medical College of New York. He was graduated from the College of New Jersey in 1758.

2 William Schenck was a graduate of the College of New Jersey in 1767. He studied theology, and married Anna Cumming, the daughter of a Freehold merchant, three years before ne was licensed to preach. Her sister Mary was the wife or Doctor Alexander Macwhorter, famous in the annals of old Newark. Mr. Schenck was the grandfather of the Hon. Robert C. Schenck, minister to Great Britain.

52 agreeable and beautiful Miss Anna Cummins of Freehold, who really is a very handsome young lady of eighteen. I think I have hit nearly on the style of the newspapers in this article.—I have been reading late numbers of the Chronicle, in which the first thing that struck me was a string of marriages. What a blessed year is this! People think of nothing but marrying and giving in marriage, and so I close with ending where I begun, that is, with marriage. I am Dr Johnny. Yours Sincerely

Wm Paterson.

To Mr McPherson.

53

LETTER X *Contains References to the Kisses of Laura Lee and Betsey Randolph*

Princeton July 31st 1768.

DR JOHNNY: I mean to write you a letter, though I have naught to say that can give you much pleasure, only merely that I am well, and this, I am vain enough to imagine, will afford you some satisfaction. But be this as it may, certain I am, that a tolerable state of

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health, fills me at least with gladness, though I hope not unaccompanied by gratitude and a becoming sense of its importance. Scarcely if ever, do we form a just estimate of the value of a thing until deprived of it, and this is the reason that health, tho' one of the greatest blessings, is esteemed so little. Mankind are weak and feeble enough by nature, without the additional weights of luxury and intemperance, but yet—what silly beings mortals are—daily observation 54 evinces, that numbers lend helping hands to their own undoing, and hasten the period of their lives, by excessive voluptuousness. Hence so many youthful valetudenarians, who worn out by intemperance and riot, labour under a complication of disorders. Such may be called self-murderers, for they bring on disease deliberately, and sickness, that shatter their constitutions, however hale, and thus bring them to untimely tombs. Bless me, what a rambling mortal I am! I have been moralising for a page, when I intended simply to say I am well, and heartily glad of it, whether you are or no. But the truth is, I was in a serious mood. I have been contemplating the vanity of riches, the frailty of beauty, the folly of mankind, and the emptiness of earthy pleasures, with the gravity of a philosopher. I behold the aims of the busy, the schemes of the politician, the aspiring hopes of the proud and ambitious, the ostentation of the great, the conquests of heroes, and even the crush of worlds, with the indifference of a Plato or a Socrates. See what it is to be a stoick! Your letter of 27th June, came to hand a few days after I had written you by Mr Halsey. Indeed I was 55 surprised at your long silence, nor did I know the reason, until I learned you had gone to Maryland. That trip could not have been very agreeable, or you would not say you could hardly be persuaded to take such another for twenty kisses of Laura Lee or Betsey Randolph. Not for twenty? Why you rogue, you should trudge round the globe for such delicious pay, for who would not love to kiss such dainty dames. I hope you found Miss R on your return as beautiful and attractive as ever. I am informed Miss Young is about to be married. As you live but a few doors from her, present my compliments. You do not tell me whether Rush was enrolled among the gentlemen of the long robe. My respects to him. I suppose he will take a second degree in the fall, if the Scotchman comes over time enough to preside

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at Commencement, when I expect to see you also. With proper respect to the young gentlemen of my acquaintance, I am, Dr Johnny, yours affectionately

Wm Paterson.

56

LETTER XI *Contains* more about Cupid

Princeton Sept 6 1768.

MY DEAR JOHNNY: I am ashamed really, that your letter of the 4th of last month, has remained unanswered so long. I thank you for the intelligence concerning Miss Young. I have a real regard for that young lady, though not of so high a nature as you intimate. Whether married or unmarried, my warmest wishes shall attend her. But do you think, Jack, that I am in love with every pretty girl I see? There is scarcely a town in the Province in which they tell me I have not a Dulcinea or two. I wish I could say of my girl, be she who she will, what you say of yours, that I have as much of her kindness as I want. What a happy fellow should I be then! I have been very particular in enquiring about Miss R-dm-n, and find she must be a most charming 57 creature. Don't be jealous. The sole reason was to become well acquainted with the character of a young lady, on whom the happiness of my friend depends so greatly. The bulk of lovers dote on their beloved objects to such a degree, as to render them blind to any imperfection. This is why I choose to rely on the judgment of others rather than that of yours.—Pray, Jack, wait on her to Commencement. I long to see whether she is so amiable as fame reports: so much for Miss Redman.—Last Thursday my sister¹ was married to one Mr Irwin, so that the truth of the report is determined, though I never heard any thing of it until you mentioned it in your letter. I am, Dr Johnny, Yours sincerely,

¹ This sister was Frances Paterson.

Wm Paterson.

LETTER XII *Contains an Account of Commencement at Princeton*

Princeton Nov 16, 1768.

MY DR JOHNNY: I should have wrote by Ogden¹ had I known of his going so soon. He promised to accompany me to Burlington, where I was to tarry until his return from Philadelphia, but Sergeant² offering him a place in his chair, the rogue had the grace to accept it, without

¹ Captain Robert Ogden belonged to a prominent Elizabeth-Town family. He was graduated from the College of New Jersey in 1765, and was one of William Paterson's fellow-clerks in the office of Richard Stockton.

² Jonathan Dickinson Sergeant, a grandson of President Dickinson. He was graduated from the College of New Jersey in 1762. He became first Attorney-General of Pennsylvania after the Declaration of Independence.

59 out so much as acquainting me. You see I had sufficient reason for not writing. I was expecting a letter from you by the return of Ogden, but no, you were too busy, you could not spare a moment, the billiard table took up all your time, you thought indeed of writing by an opportunity so favorable, but could not possibly disengage yourself from company, and so hoped I might excuse you: mighty excusable indeed! Why Jack, you are a most provoking fellow. I have been thinking what method would be most likely to make you a punctual correspondent, and apprehend I have hit on an expedient which will reform you entirely, and most assuredly shall put in motion, unless you mend your hand, and that quickly. If you prove so remiss in the future, I shall have to write *at* instead of *to* you. Don't you think that will be attended with happy effects? Be this as it will, I am resolved to try every method in order to *provoke* you to be more speedy in your answers if possible as I wish you had been at Burlington last week. I wanted to see you very much. Rush informed me why you did not attend Commencement, and I assure you I felt sensibly the

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affliction 60 stroke which stepped in to retard you. I am glad the consequence was not so bad as I had been led to fear, for I am informed your father has pretty well recovered, and is in as good a state of health, as can be expected reasonably. I should have wrote you by Rush, or some other acquaintance at Commencement, had I not fairly been tired out with the exercises of the day. Late as it is, had I time I would give you a detail of Commencement, an account of which, no doubt you have seen in the papers, but not in all things conformable to the truth. I cannot help saying, that although the bulk of the young men made a handsome appearance, yet some really fell short of the expectation of their friends. Last week I applied for admission into practice, which was granted readily after a slight examination, but I must go again before I can be initiated fully. The Governor gives the License, and all that remains to be done, is to wait for the coming home of His Excellency: he has been at Fort Stanwix for some time, treating with the Indians. Do you think, Jack, you could order matters so as to meet me at Burlington? If you can, pray let me know, and I will appoint the day.

RICHARD MONTGOMERY From the painting by Chappel

61 The winter season will set in soon, and so the Governor will take care to be at home within two or three weeks at the farthest. I am Dr Jack

Sincerely Yours, Wm. Paterson.

62

LETTER XIII *Contains a Reference to the Illness of William Davies*

Princeton, Jany 27th 1769.

DR SIR: I was at Burlington on Thursday, one of the days appointed, but was so unhappy as not to have the pleasure of seeing you there. The roads were exceedingly bad, the day lowering and cold, which for your sake, made me heartily glad that you did not venture out, though for my own, I could not forbear wishing that you would. Billy Davies¹ has been sick

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with the pleurisy ever since he has been here, though now he is on the mending hand, and I believe will be able

1 William Davies was the eldest son of President Davies. He was graduated from the College of New Jersey in 1765. In the Revolution he attained the rank of colonel in the American army. His home was in Norfolk, Virginia, where he practised law.

63 to set out for Elizabeth-Town next week I expected a letter by him, but was disappointed, and what vexed me the more was, that it is six weeks since I heard from you. Adieu, Dr Sir, and believe me to be, Yours Sincerely

Wm Paterson.

To Mr McPherson.

64

LETTER XIV *Contains more Gossip of the Times*

Princeton, February 15th 1769.

MY DR SIR: Yours by Dr Scudder¹ has just come to hand, and as the best way to atone for past offences, is to behave better for the future, so I have took up the pen just to give you a specimen of my reformation. But why so censorious? Methinks you are very desirous of shifting the blame from yourself, for on my conscience, I believe you should have wrote long ere now, especially if it is considered you are in arrears so largely. A great part of your letter is unnecessary

1 Dr. Nathaniel Scudder, a prominent physician of Monmouth County. He was graduated from the College of New Jersey in 1751. At the opening of the Revolution he entered actively into public life. From 1777 to 1779 he represented New Jersey in the Continental Congress. He frequently visited the Stockton family of Princeton.

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65 sary, altogether: why do you give an excuse now for not writing by Ogden, when you apologised for it two months ago? But I shall pass over this, remembering now what Pope says, "Wits have short memories and dunces none." There is a line or two quite enigmatical, absolutely incomprehensible. For my life, I cannot understand what you say about the Dutch School. Is it that you are learning the language, or as I am inclined to think, a cant phrase among the spirits of the town? If so, it is not wonderful that I am puzzled, for it is a million to one, if it extends beyond the purlieus of the City. What, my Jack, not a word about Miss L-w-c! Surprising indeed! And more surprising still, not a word about Miss R-d-n. Surely I imagined your letters would be filled with Loves and Darts and Flames and Arrows. Having access daily to the shrine of your Divinity, should make you burst forth all ecstasy and song, should make you eloquent in praise of your Becky, but far removed from my charmer, it cannot be expected that I should be poetick in any way in praise of my Nancy. After the manner of Swift, we may "Sing Nancy and Becky and 5 66 Nancy."—I shall leave Princeton in the Spring, but to what comer of the Globe I know not. To live at ease, and pass through life without much noise and bustle is all for which I care, or wish. One of the principal things I regard is, to be situated well with regard to friends, and without flattery I can say, the nearer to you, the better, for I know not the friend in the world, of whom I can be fonder than you. But be the distance what it will, I shall be incapable of forgetting you. You wish me success if I do not cross the River. Rush would call this an hypothetical wish, and so worth nothing. If I settle in a certain part of the Jersies, that friends would persuade me to do, I shall practise undoubtedly in Pennsylvania. Sergeant urges me strongly, though indeed, the fees in your Province are trifling compared with those in ours. A large inducement to crossing the River, will be the pleasure of seeing you now and then. My compliments to Rush: I hear he drew £100 in the Lottery. I give him joy. I hear also he is admitted into the practice: if true, I give him double joy, and wish him success wherever he goes. There is a noble wish, not confined like 67 yours, but unlimited, like Dan Sheridan's long nose. I am, my Dr Sir, Your affectionate

Wm Paterson.

To Mr MacPherson. 1

1 This is the first letter in which the name Macpherson is properly spelled.

68

LETTER XV *Contains Musings on Leaving a Boyhood Home*

Princeton, May 20th 1769.

DR SIR: I am in daily expectation of bidding Adieu to Princeton and removing far back in the country, where I shall live mewed up, conversing with none but the dead. You may smile, but I assure you it is true. It pains me to leave a place, where I have spent the greatest part of my life, where I have met the most agreeable friends, & formed the most valuable connections. I never shall think of Princeton without mingled Emotions of Pleasure and pain, Pleasure to think how agreeably, and I would flatter myself, innocently, I past the most dangerous part of Life, Pain, to think these Hours and those days, never more would 69 return. The remembrance, and a sad one it is sometimes, that once I was happy, will force itself upon me now and then in spite of my utmost efforts. Were you to see me in one of those melancholy fits, when so much Pensiveness and Gloom are on my Brow, you would swear I was the Knight of the Rueful Countenance. But drown Sorrow, for I am tired heartily of this Bion Stile.—I suppose you have returned by this time from the back Courts, and hope the Excursion proved agreeable. You informed me you went to “please Rush, but expected to find something more pleasing than purling streams or blooming Fields, or even the noise of Courts, rattling with the Silver Sound of Dollars.” I can answer you only in the Words of Moliere's doubting Philosopher: it may be, or it may not be, as all Things are doubtful. But do you think really it is so difficult to guess what this pleasing Something is, a most ravishing Something no doubt that recalls the pretty lines of Prior, at the close of one of his Fables, to which I refer without quoting, as you are familiar with his Poetry. But I must not be too curious about prying into your secrets, for it may

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partake 70 of the Nature of one of the occult Qualities of Aristotle, and so will stop right here. Yours Sincerely, Wm Paterson

Mr MacPherson

71

LETTER XVI *Contains an Account of a Search for Cunningham's Dictionary*

New Bromley, JULY 26th 1769.

DR SIR: It is nearly four months since I have been favoured with a Line: perhaps you have wrote, and the Letter has been unfortunate in its passage. It is some time since I was in Princeton, where you may remember, I asked you to direct. Next week I shall be at Trenton Court, and shall return by way of Princeton, where I hope to hear from you. Capt Ogden is just ready to start for Philadelphia, and therefore I must be short. The main design of this Letter is to be informed, whether any of the Stationers in your Place, have Cunninghams Law Dictionary, and if so the Price. I have deferred purposely, purchasing a Dictionary in Hope of meeting with Cunninghams, which I am told is far from being a despicable performance. 72 Better it may, but worse it cannot well be than Jacobs, of which I have a very low Opinion. I am, Dr Sir, Sincerely Yours.

Wm Paterson.

Mr MacPherson.

73

LETTER XVII *Contains Reflections on the Usefulness of Beaux and Monkies to Lonely People*

New Bromley, May 1st 1770.

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MY DR JOHNNY: Opportunities of writing occur so rarely, that it is very inexcusable to let them pass. I am sincere, and never shall: whether you are, I hardly venture to say, though if I must speak, it would be, you are not. What startled, my Jack? You need not be, for I do not impeach your friendship. I will not and cannot question your affection: indeed, it is my interest not to do that, as it would only give us pain. The truth is, I live in a part of the Province, destitute almost wholly of conversable beings. Familiar discourse, and even what the fashionable world calls small talk, which I take to be easy nonsense, is useless to persons who lead a sedentary life, and must serve by way of relaxation, when 74 better cannot be had. A gay, good natured chatty fool, a sort of animal often met in your town, may be amusing for a few moments, but the misfortune is, that he has a kind of adhesive quality, which makes it difficult to shake him off at pleasure. A person of sense, must be in an uncomfortable situation when a swarm of talkative coxcombs are buzzing about his ears: fly from them he cannot, for to show their good breeding, they stick to him like leeches: to get angry would be to no purpose, for they are of a temper so easy they cannot be provoked, and indeed it is hard to tell how to be vexed at good nature, even when lodged in the breast of a fool. Ah Jack, would to heaven you could toss us a few of your city fools, for though we have dunces enough in the country, yet they are far from being so merry as those of the town. A monkey should be brisk, and the more diverting the better. Beaux and monkeys, and such kind of creatures, are highly serviceable to persons of a studious and lonely turn: indeed they may be, and I question not are resorted to often, for the same reason that most of the European Princes have their fools, merely to provoke mirth, and set the 75 laughing faculties in motion. Men of wisdom, will fall into a trifling vein at times, and then, *vive la bagatelle* . Observe men of genius when they come from their closets, or are roused out of a deep study, and you will notice them say and do the most trifling things. In their most unguarded moments, you would not think them of a superior order, perhaps not equal to a number of gay, lively young fellows to be seen at any public place, for to trifle agreeably, often is the talent of a coxcomb, seldom of a man of genius, and never of a person who leads a retired life. The reason is, this is an accomplishment only to be gained in the fashionable world, and 4therefore it is, that so few of extensive

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knowledge have acquired. Solitude is congenial to learning, conferring no grace of manner or appearance, but the reverse, being an offence to genteel company. A fool cannot be a fop, for the profession of a coxcomb requires both genius and tact to secure success. When you reach the ground floor of the matter, there is a school of fashion and folly, as well as of philosophy and science, and genius will shine in either. It is not likely however, that any one person can attain 76 equal eminence in both. How I have written and wrote, until I have lost sight of what I had in view at first, for I designed to explain a passage in the beginning of this letter, which doubtless you remember as it relates to yourself, but that must be deferred till my next, as the paper is run out. Give my compliments to Rush, and believe me to be, Dr Johnny, Yours Forever,

Wm Paterson.

Mr John MacPherson, Junr.

77

LETTER XVIII *Contains an Account of Some Visionary Ladies*

New Bromley, July 27th 1770.

DEAR JACK. I am fond of solitude, though I would not care to live forever in a cave. A great degree of solitude is suited only to contemplative minds, and even men of the most solitary turn, cannot recline eternally in its shade. The pensive soul that feeds on grief, and seeks no sorrow but its own, may refrain from the haunts of men, may delight to listen to the fall of waters, and joy to wander through trackless plains and sequestered groves. Solemn glooms, lonesome mansions, and cheerless shades, likewise, may befit those whose cheeks are furrowed with age, and in the decline of life, may be called very properly, Christian Solitude. But what have young and active minds to do with retreat? To run in the bloom of youth 78 to nunlike retirement, is unnatural and unsociable: to take leave of the world, to make an exit ere yet we have made an appearance scarcely on the stage of action, is absurd, nay worse, for it is treason against mankind. Every person

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should spend a small part of his time in solitude, because it learns him to think, and that great lesson, to know himself. The Greek philosopher put sententiously what each one knew very well before. Self knowledge is essential to happiness, and for that purpose, solitude is the best companion. To know others is necessary in order to act well our part. Life unemployed is a useless boon. But some professions, and that of law especially, demand more than ordinary retirement, because interruption must be attended, more or less, with dissipation of thought. The study of this profession, is disagreeable and dry, particularly to a beginner. Naturally, this branch of learning is unpalatable, and a certain degree of solitude, as promoting contemplation, is of value, for regulating and modulating the work. Extremes should be avoided. A bow long bent, loses its spring, so application long continued, jades the fancy, 79 weakens the judgment, and, if the expression may be used, unnerves the man. Close attention creates a sort of vis inertiae in the intellectual world, as philosophy says there is in the material, and relaxation becomes necessary. My situation here is irk-some on this account and this only, that there is scarcely any amusement to which I can resort, when wearied with study or tired with work. What shall I do to recruit exhausted nature? I take up Swift, and by his humour, hope to find relief, but reading is the cause of my complaint. It is absurd surely to think of removing the effect, by continuing the cause. No relaxation, no amusement, sad indeed! Ah Jack, how often do I wish for your presence to brighten the gloomy scene. My chiefest joy, my best medicine is to think of an absent friend, or I will say it myself, for you will be roguish enough to do it, muse an encomium on Miss—. The latter is ideal and vision all. My Ladies are quixotical, purely imaginary, and have no more reality than the dreams of a Poet, or the schemes of a Projector. It is easy to form a visionary Amanda, that shall excel the Venus of Medicis in beauty: give full play to 80 the imagination, and the work is done. What an happy fellow would you be, had your Girl, your Miss Patty, or Peggy, or Polly, half the good qualities of my imaginary little Beauty. I have been running over one in fancy just now, and thought it would shine in song, or tell well even in a letter, and so give it to you, but faith Jack, on considering it fully, I find it but an exact description of Miss—you know who. When sick of reading or writing, I call in Fancy, and pass my friends in review before me, an occupation

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agreeable and useful, as fixing their memory deeper in my heart, and as operating by way of relaxation. Is it ever thus with you? Does the ideal presence of absent friends rise up to your view? Doubtful, Jack, very doubtful. But should you once in a while give a sober view to meditation and serious thoughtfulness, should you fall now and then in a musing vein, and call up the remembrance of an absent friend, yet the lively flutter of a fan, or the rustling of the first petticoat that brushes before you, would wake you in a moment from your dream. Your situation is gay, sprightly, cheerful: mine gloomy, solitary, sad. Pleasure courts you 81 in a thousand different ways, while I have but one solitary walk to pursue. You think seldom of friends, I often: you think seldom of me, I often of you. Our different situations naturally lead us to do so. Hence the reason of what I said in some of my late letters. But why run out the parallel? It is time to close, which I do by saying this letter is very long, very sober, very dull, and I may write many more such, unless you prohibit it. I am, my dear Jack, ever your affectionate,

Wm Paterson.

Mr John MacPherson, Junr, Phila. 6

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LETTER XIX *Contains Accounts of Philadelphia Beauties and a Eulogium on a Woodland Nymph*

New Bromley July 30th 1770.

I AM all Musick, Jack, and write in a melodious Humour. The Hour in which every sweet and lively Passion is in Play, should be consecrated to Friendship, unless the still more soft and tender Feelings of Love should lay claim to it. Your little Hermit is captivated, and in Danger of being lost forever. The Sound of Harmony still jingles in my Ears, and never till this instant did I know the full Force of Love. You boast of your Philadelphia Beauties, but I venture to say, you may search the City and not find a Nymph so engaging. Neither your enchanting Peggy with all her Delicacy, nor your adored Patty with all her Charms,

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can equal my Woodland Maid. She is purely rural, and cannot bear the noise and tumult of a City: she flies to 83 the Country, and dwells in the midst of a Grove, among Caves and Rocks. She delights in Simplicity, and is fond of the still Hour of Evening. It costs a World of Trouble to woo a City Dame, but it is the easiest Thing in Nature to court my Country Lass. One is all obliging and familiar, the other, forbidding and reserved. She is gay when I am gay and sad when I am sad. She catches and returns my Passion, and her Tone and Temper always accord with mine. Don't you think Hours must run away pleasantly with such a Companion? Her vocal Quality being admirable, makes me fond of listening to her Talk, and I assure you she was more enchanting than ever to-day: she ravished me, but it was as Wycherly says, with her Voice, which was Musick itself. Her name is Echo, or the vocal Nymph. The Truth is, two Gentlemen of my Acquaintance, on their rambles came to my Hermitage and spent a Day or two with me, one being skilled in Musick, and having a Flute, entertained the Company very agreeably, but to add to the Pleasure, insisted we should hunt up an Echo, which we did, and found one of very full Tone and Quality. I never heard 84 any thing more enchantingly harmonious: he was an excellent Player, and the Place suited so happily, that every Note was returned back most distinctly.—Your Letter of the 24th received yesterday at Meeting,¹ is a convincing Proof, that you can get up a respectable document in that line, if you give the whole of your Mind to it. You have combined admirably much News and Politicks in it. I should like to have been present when the Resolves about the Yorkers were passed, principally to hear the young Gentleman you mention, play the Orator. Some of his Talents are well known, but what sort he was at Eloquence I will not say. I have read somewhere, in Swift I think, that “Fluency of Speech is owing to Scarcity of Matter and Words, for Men who have but one Sett of Ideas, and one Sett of Words to clothe them, never are at a loss to express themselves: whereas they who have a Variety, often are puzzled to make a Choice.” The Remark is

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1 The “meeting” at which he received the letter was the Presbyterian Church at Lamington, one of the earliest churches erected in that portion of New Jersey. The original building remained standing until 1826.

85 just, and I find it true from frequent Observation. Therefore I do not doubt the C—m—r has a glib Tongue, and rattled on fluently enough, or as Johnny Forrest, another of those eternal Chatterers, said of one of the College Speakers, “he orated in a copious manner.” I follow the Order of your Letter, and so “now for something by way of Reflection.” You have chosen a most beautiful Object for that Purpose. Miss Cheatham of Trenton is so handsome and genteel, that I must pause to contemplate in Fancy, her many and ravishing Charms. Harmony of Shape combines with Gracefulness of Mien, which with Sweetness of Voice, Mildness of Aspect, Delicacy of Shape, and the languishing Softness of smiling Eyes, have made that Heart of yours, Dear Jack, to flutter and beat as if it would break out from the Fastness of your Breast. Who loves her best, can best describe her as she is, her Charms, Attractions, Graces, all, and so I resign the agreeable Task to you. But you must appreciate this spontaneous and enthusiastic, though entirely disinterested Tribute to Beauty that can win Admiration, without—well you know exactly how to fill out 86 the sentence without the words being set down in black and white by me. My time is not as yet. When that shall come, if it ever does, I hope to be more worthy in all respects than I am now. Still neither Fame or Fortune can wait on the Laggard. This is a parenthetical “Reflection,” not quite Apropos. Please mark it so. Did I see her on my Journey to Princeton? No, for I was so tired & out of Tune on reaching Trenton, that I had to rest. Next week is Hunterdon Court: I shall be at Trenton again and hope to have a sight of your Charmer, simply as an admirer: if so I will take occasion to introduce your name, and let you know how it took! You may see England in the Fall, and ask can I go with you. That would give me real Pleasure. A few years hence I may go there, but fear I cannot at present. I wish we could arrange to go together when that time does come. However, should you resolve on going, I will consider the Matter more fully, as your Company would add to the Pleasure of the Trip.—With this, you will receive another long Letter written

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previously. These will convince you, that no charming Nymph, no tender Von Brisket of 87 half a Ton in Weight or half a Pole in Circumference, made me forgetful of my little City Friend. That is a vile Insinuation of yours against my fair Country-women, but I notice it no farther at present. I am, my very Dear Johnny,

Yours For Ever, Wm Paterson.

Mr MacPherson.

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LETTER XX *Contains a Treatise on the Value of Good Family*

Princeton, November 12th 1771.

DEAR JACK: Supposing you are in London, as being not only the place you had in view originally, but also where you Scotsmen have an admirable Knack of getting there as fast as you can, I can write with some assurance of a letter reaching you. Your people seem to be attracted thither either by an instinctive faculty, or a desire for wealth or preferment. You hardly have sufficient Caledonian blood, to call you true blue, and what little may be in your veins, has been purified by your residence on this side of the waters. I have a filial affection for Scotland, and lose all patience when I hear people rail against it. I have the happiness or unhappiness, as you may please, of being part of a Scotsman myself, for, and I don't care who knows it, my grand father or great grand father, was born and rocked in that part of the 89 Isles, which is sufficient in all conscience to entitle me to the name. At times I glory in being a Scotchman, though perhaps, I should say that vanity never swells so high as when I think myself of Scotch origin. Wise ones indeed laugh at birth as being of trifling nature, and not at all matter for boast. Whoever, say they, thought highly of noble birth that had any good quality beside, and whoever, say I, thought lightly of it, but he that really wanted it. A man prefers that his ancestors should be somebodies rather than nobodies, even though they can occupy but the small lot of land in the end. The largest Empire is under ground, and the population has been increasing ever since

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life was breathed into the world and death was breathed out. Emigration is unknown in that Kingdom. The truth is, we live in an ill-natured world: they who have not virtue envy those who have. It is a common expression, such a one is well bred: is it not to the full as proper to say, such a one is well born? It must I think, be very pleasing for every true Scotsman, such as you and I to reflect that he is descended as Churchill says, "From great and glorious, though perhaps 90 forgotten Kings." But aside from digression, Jack, you are a traveller now: as such you are to answer what questions I put, and tell what lies you please. I shall not enquire into the manners of the Scots, their genius, customs, laws, manufactories, etc., because it cannot be expected you can answer them. But on the whole, I will reserve the queries for a future letter, as my paper is giving out, and I have been busy here all the day, merely hoping that you have escaped the—well say scraches and all other nameless ills hereditary to your countrymen, and that nothing more disagreeable has befallen you than a little dirt, which would be getting off wonderfully well. Princeton is much the same, and I have only room to add, by way of news, that about two weeks ago, young Dr Barnet¹ was married to a Miss Stow; you may know who she is.

Yours Sincerely,

¹ Dr. William M. Barnet. With his wife he later removed from Princeton to Elizabeth-Town, where he built the house subsequently occupied for many years by General Winfield Scott. Philip Freneau, the Revolutionary poet, wrote a tributary ode on the death of the virtuous Mrs. Barnet.

Wm Paterson.

John MacPherson, Junr. Esq.

THE STOCKTON HOUSE, PRINCETON, NEW JERSEY Where William Paterson studied law

LETTER XXI *Contains Pictures of English Society and College Society*

Princeton, June 26th 1772

DEAR JACK: Laziness only has prevented me from writing: nothing else. I am ashamed that I have written but once since you sailed. Are you disposed to think I have forgotten you entirely, or that absence has abated the warmth of my affection? Dismiss the thought. My regard is as great and sincere as at any time during our former intimacy. That I have been silent so long impute to business, to laziness to any thing but want of affection.— Your two letters of 30th September and 14th February are at hand, and I am obliged for your particularity. Do so in the future, for with the rest of mankind, I confess to be fond of whatever is wonderful or new. Curiosity is craving, and implanted in every 92 breast. Anecdotes of persons in eminent stations, or famed for ability, are listened to with attention, & indeed seem to be universally pleasing. I would be glad for you to give a character & description of Mansfield, Camden, Burke, Barré, Woodburn, Dunning Etc. Mansfield always has been high in my esteem: as a genius and a speaker, he is universally admired. I am told he has a mouth, if I may so express it, finely hung for elocution, and that he seldom speaks without carrying conviction. As a lawyer, he is censured by some for his principle of equitising, which he stretches rather too far. He has an assemblage of graces and qualities rarely to be found in one man, a comely person, a charming voice, and a fine genius. Of Burke we know little but as a writer: his person, like that of Blackstone, I am told, is diminutive, and his appearance ungracious. His chief beauty is energy, his chief fault want of ease. Norton has given several opinions in cases respecting land in this Province. I have met with some, but worded so obscurely, that it was impossible to understand them. I have seen an opinion or two of Widderburne, in his own hand-writing, 93 penned with peculiar elegance and accuracy. Were I in England, I would collect anecdotes of persons eminent for station, learning, and genius. Hardly anything is sought after more here, or renders a person more agreeable in conversation. —In writing now, you cannot want for matter, for every thing wears the face of novelty,

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the country, the people, their manners, their divisions and even their dress, have in them something new. So if your letters are not of a decent length, it will be owing merely to laziness, as no one can accuse you of want of a mind. Did I live in Philadelphia, my letter might be more entertaining, though not more sincere. I could tell of your Becky and your Peggy, and a score or too more of girls, or rather goddesses you were wont to adore. It is likely a new race of beauties have possessed your heart, for English Ladies are handsome, and you are amorous. Perhaps you may marry before you return: if you do, Jack, pray let your mate be gentle and goodnatured, amiable, and genteel, qualities, which cannot, like beauty, be withered by time, nor like reputation, blasted by slander. Nothing is more intolerable than a handsome fool, except it be a fury or a scold. 94 I am tempted almost to foreswear matrimony, and take a vow of perpetual celibacy. The bulk of women are eaten up so cursedly with pride and affectation, and so ignorant and illnatured withall, that it is almost impossible to live with them. We have a number of pretty girls here now, a new race of beauties, Jack, since you left it. I meet them rarely. If you were here for a day or two, I am sure you would be diverted. A scholar in love is very asinine. Were you here I could give you a description of some of the girls, and character of some of their lovers, and private anecdotes of both, that would afford you infinite amusement and diversion. The College always has teemed with fools of this cast, there were enough of them in all conscience when we were in it, and mercy on me, the breed has increased surprisingly of late.—The Governor of Penna has married Miss Masters: doubtless you know his Rib. Some say she is handsome, some, passably, and some, quite homely. Thirty thousand Pounds are thirty thousand charms. Young Meredith is married to Miss Cadwalader, the very Nymph you used to make so great a clatter about. Love makes fools of all. 95 I begin to fear it is impossible to reason it down. In your fits of the kind you used to call her your enchanting Peggy, and sing of her to the tune of “The Lass With The Delicate Air.” Jack Taylor, Willings partner, is married to Miss Huston; so much for news in the matrimonial way.—You may have heard that young Waller has forsaken the law, because he found it difficult for an honest man to be a lawyer. Some extol his action as a noble sacrifice to the cause of virtue and religion, while others attribute his conduct to a disordered intellect. All

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I know of the matter is from publick fame, and she, like other females, is so arrant a liar, that it is hard to know when to believe her. It is certain however that he has declined the practice, and the opening now is fine, the best in the Colonies. Dickinson and Galloway are ridding themselves of business, and one of your capacities might get into a handsome practice at a jump. I wish you were here to do so.—Weeks, the Prothonotary of Bucks is dead. John Berrien, a Justice of the Supreme Court of the Jersies, drowned himself in April: the jury found lunacy.—My compliments to Rush: he has forgotten his promise 96 to write, but then he lives nigh the Court.—That application has been made in England for an American Episcopate is known here. The newspapers are full of it. The Dissenters are so jealous of each other, it is not likely they will unite and petition against it, or if they did, it is a million to one if that would not promote rather than prevent the scheme. The Bishops and Thirty nine Articles have been censured so severely in the University of Cambridge and the late debates in Parliament, that it is to be hoped those Reverend Fathers will find full employment at home, without intermeddling in the politicks of America. I am satisfied, that in the Colonies, few of the Church of England, except those who are stiled High-Fliers, espouse the cause, or are in the least desirous of succeeding. In the Southern Provinces, composed principally of people in communion with the Church of England, a Bishop would meet with the severest opposition.—Pray what is the Macaroni Club? I am told it is made up of noblemen, who meet to invent fashions, etc. A laudable institution truly. Doctor Morgan is in Jamaica soliciting donations to the College, or as 97 he stiles it in his address, the University of Philadelphia. Dr Williamson is in the same place, in behalf of the Newark School, and the Revd Baily has gone to the West India Islands in favor of the Jersey College. My best respects wait on your father. I am, Dr Jack, most affectionately yours

Wm Paterson.

John Macpherson, Junr, Esq., London. 7

LETTER XXII *Contains an Imaginary Picture of a Fashionable Man in London*

Princeton, September 4th 1772.

DEAR JACK: In my last I promised to write again soon, and I like to keep my word, but really, Jack, there is nothing to tell. It is easy to write if matter is ready, but it goes mightily against the grain, for a person who has a spice of laziness in his composition, and no way of spinning out a letter, than by invoking Fancy. Lazy as I am however, it does not prevent me from thinking of you frequently, though it may of writing. At the call of Fancy, your image often comes up, and hope which revels through life, and brightens every prospect, aided by a disposition that makes us ready to believe whatever we desire, dresses up your friendly figure in the most flattering colours. Sometimes you appear among 99 the beau-monde, frequenting play houses, operas and balls, a professed admirer of every fashionable amusement, now sauntering along the Mall, or taking a turn in St. James, not so much for the walk as the women, and strange medley of mortals to be seen in such places; sometimes a connoisseur in shells, in musty medals and Egyptian Mummies, a virtuoso. Sometimes I follow you to your chamber, view you revolving on some abstruse point of law, poring over dry pages of the great Masters: now a politician deep in mysteries of state, adjusting the balance of Europe, and betting on war or peace, on the life or death of Princes. Sometimes—but there is no end to the vagaries of Fancy. There are ten thousand ways of killing time in England unknown here. When tired of myself, and every thing around me, I seek my pillow, and invoking the God of Sleep, endeavor to sink into oblivion, “the world forgetting, by the world forgot.” This, with respect to others at least, is an inoffensive way of getting rid of the moments that hang heavy upon me. If there is nothing to employ a vacant hour, surely it is far better to glide along quietly, reclining in the lap

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of sleep, than to plan schemes detrimental to others, though perhaps advantageous to self. This naturally to closing this letter, which, I doubt not, will prove quite tiresome to the reader. I am, dr Jack, yours sincerely, Wm Paterson.

October 12th: The above has not been sent for want of an opportunity until now. I live so much in the country, that London vessels come and go without my knowledge. I shall endeavor to make some sure arrangement for forwarding letters in the future.—News, The Revd. J. Halsey was married about two weeks ago to a certain Polly Henry, one of his parishioners, a young lady of sixteen, one of the sightliest, most gay and showy girls in his congregation. He is forty, it is January wed to July. Rush arrived about three weeks ago. He had no letter for me: pray why did not you write by him? Had I omitted so fair an opportunity I should think myself inexcusable. Perhaps I have not written as often as I might.

Wm Paterson.

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LETTER XXIII *Contains the last on the Subject of Love and Miss Rebecca Redman*

September 15th 1773.

YOUR letter shows you to be in high spirits, Jack, though what set you in so pleasing a flow, is hard to tell, for you say business is not extra-ordinary as yet. Business, especially in the Law way, seldom is at first: it increases little by little: its progress is slow & gradual. I know of no young lawyer, unless abetted by a Party of Influence, that has any great run of Practice. Have Patience: the Prospect will brighten as you advance in Life. I imagine Miss R-dm-n has been playing off her charms. In my Conscience, I believe she bewitches every one who looks at her. A Smile makes you as airy as a Bee, but her Frown—there is the Devil, she can frown too as well as smile—throws you into a melancholy Frame 102 and that brings on the Hip. Here is an Ideal of you in so piteous a Case. Miss says something

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clever in favor of a Rival, for Beauties are inclined wickedly that way, something ill natured against yourself. A Fit of the Spleen is on her, her Head Dress is awry, or her Lap-Dog is dead, or she was not invited to a Party, or something of equal Importance comes in the Way, and makes her look gloomy as Night. Well what shall be done to rid her Ladyship of the Poutts? You play over all your old Tricks, but in vain, and as you retire, she gives you an angry Look, with a Frown that does not become her Beauty. So you go home melancholy Mad, and mope and mux, and sigh, or rail, and rave and storm. But a few days of this is sufficient, and when you next wait on the Nymph, you find her in high good Humour, receiving you kindly, and chiding you perhaps for staying away so long. She is all smiles and Goodness, soft, languishing, kind, you all rapture. I imagine on your return from Miss R. with whom you had a most happy Interview that set you in a flow of good humour, you wrote the Letter you sent last. In such a Case, it is expected you should put others in the 103 like temper. When I saw my Blousalind last, she had a touch of the Spleen too, for Country Girls, you know, are mighty Fashion-Mongers and Bodies for Imitation, and take on Airs as well as your City Madams. But these set so awkwardly upon them, and make them appear so ungracious, that it is hard to tell whether to laugh or be angry. Why what the murrain hath come over you, Blousalind? Have you been saying Prayers, or thinking over the last Sermon, or setting your Face for the next? In this Letter a young Friend just from England, requests a Favour, in a manner so Genteel, that it cannot fail of being granted. See how prettily he writes. What say you Blousalind? Do be good-natured and give your consent. How came this Friend of yours to Know anything of me. Oh as for that, I can satisfy your Ladyship easily, for faith, I told him myself. Told him yourself! and pray what did you tell him, something pretty, I suppose: come let me hear it. Positively, I will not consent unless you do. The unreasonable Jade! Why I told him you were blooming as the Spring, and mild as the Dawn of a Summer Day, beautiful as an Angel, and had a voice like, like, 104 faith like a Nightingale. Pshaw, mere Fiction, common place Fiction. Did you say anything particular, for instance, of my Eyes, or Eyebrows, or Cheeks or Lips, or—Yes, and yes, and yes. I said a World of Fine Things: you Know I love to dwell on them, smooth, shiny Hair, fine wicked Eyebrows, dark lustrous Eyes, rosy Cheeks, Lips

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to tempt an Anchorite, and a Bosom so billowy, so—Softly there, what of my Forehead? True a Forehead smooth and polished, zounds I forgot that in my hurry to get at your Lips, on which you Know I love to dwell. In short, Madam, I made you out a perfect Goddess, save now and then a Fit of Vapours will seize your Goddess-ship, and then you sink into a mere Mortal. Oh how apt you are to flatter—and oh how fond you are to hear it.—Really I cannot say when I shall be in Philadelphia, sometime this Fall, though late in the Season. Try to be at Commencement, I dare say you can spare the Time. Without Flattery, Jack, I had rather see you there than all the rest of the People put together.—Ask Miss Redman. Do Dear Miss, suffer your adoring Swain to take a Ramble into the country for a few 105 Days. Like Noahs Dove, after his Excursion, he will return to your Arms with new Ardour. Compliments to Rush. Yours most sincerely

Wm Paterson.

PART II THE BELLE OF PRINCETON BETSEY STOCKTON

A poem written at Nassau Hall

1772

By WILLIAM PATERSON

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THE BELLE OF PRINCETON BETSEY STOCKTON

Written at the College of New Jersey, 1772, and read before the Clisosophic Society

A BOOKISH blockhead, and ill-bred, Who still affects his class to lead: A man of mighty Influence Pity! he lacks for common Sense. Why need I sing of Armstrong Jemmy¹ Who loves so well his Sampink Lilly? Why need I sing of Frank Dunlap? May he in love have no mishap—

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1 “Armstrong Jemmy” James Francis Armstrong, a Southerner, who was graduated from the College of New Jersey in 1773. He studied divinity under Dr. Witherspoon, and was ordained by the Presbytery of New Castle, January, 1778. During a part of the Revolution he was chaplain of the Second Maryland Brigade. He was married to Susanna Livingston, of Princeton, by Dr. Witherspoon, in August, 1782. For the long period of thirty years he was pastor of the First Presbyterian Church at Trenton, and his memory is still cherished throughout Southern New Jersey.

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Why need I sing of Miss Longstreet, So modest, debonair & neat? She my best wishes hath, & soon, Before the next revolving moon, May John Smith¹ and she the Pleasures know, That from a marry'd life can flow. Those Beauties o'er, proceed we next, To nymph the last & nymph the best. Hail, Betsey,² hail, thou Virgin bright And mild as the chaste orb of night. Betsey all hail! Rapt in amaze, Thy beauties o'er & o'er I gaze; Feast on each Charm, each Charm devour Whilst stript of almost ev'ry Pow'r

1 John Smith was a native of Connecticut who was graduated from Princeton in 1770. He became a missionary among the Indians in Northern New York.

2 Betsey, or Elizabeth, Stockton was the daughter of Captain John Stockton, a younger brother of “Richard Stockton the Signer.” Her mother, Mary Hibbets, at the time of her marriage with Captain Stockton, was the widow of James Nelson, of Bethel, Pennsylvania. From her mother Betsey inherited the beauty young William Paterson invoked the aid of the genius of Pope and the Muses Nine to help him adequately describe. This belle of Princeton eventually married Abner Long, a native of Pennsylvania, and went away to the wilds of Allegheny to live.

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Save that of Light, I gaze & gaze, 'Tis dazzl'd with all Beauty's Blaze I prostrate fall; and where before I only gazed at, now adore— Thy Genius Pope, ye nine thy Aid! Teach

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me to paint this heav'nly Maid Teach me to sing in smoothest rhyme In numbers lofty
& sublime, The Beauties of her mind & Face, Each pleasing Virtue & each grace Vain
Invocation! why desire Pope's Genius & the Muses' fire, Her beauty can alone inspire!
So then friend Will, methinks you say, 'Tis arrant Love that tunes yr Lay; Your Flame why
labour to conceal That Blush your Passion doth reveal— Strive, Strive all you can, yet
no doubt The mighty Secret will come out, Will, too in Love! prodigious fine I see love
breathe in every Line. Will, too in Love! O happening rare! Come tell us of this wond'rous
Fair. Swear that in beauty, & in grace, 112 She far excels the female Race; Swear too,
no mortal Miss as yet, Has equal'd her in Sense & Wit. To show how mighty well you love
Bring down each goddess from above. Say that Hebe's bloom & Venus's air With dear
Miss Betsey's can't compare. Say that she is, wt most those prize, As Dian chaste, as
Pallas wise. Peace honest Friend, you rail in Spite, And faith mistake the matter quite. Tho'
Betsey doth in Beauty's Line The brightest & the foremost Shine Tho' her fair Form each
Breast inspires With chastest wishes and desires Tho' she's of Manners most refined, Of
Sweetest Temper, gentlest mind, Tho' she's Ye Phoenix of her Race, In her each virtue is
a grace Tho' she is all that man can move, Or Poets fancy when they love; Yet what care I,
my Lot you know (Oh Lot the saddest sure below) Forbid to love what need I care

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Who is most witty, neat, or fair Who has ye finest shape or eye. I must not love; Oh
Fortune hard, Of Life's chief Bliss to be debarr'd! I must not love; oh cruel Fate Why was I
cast in such a State? Yet what 'vails Grief; perhaps tis best That Love should never seize
my breast Tho' from Love the sweetest Pleasures flow Yet oft, quite oft they're ting'd with
woe. Some pine, some sicken (still more sad) Some die for Love & some run mad, Behold
yon hapless lovesick maid, Reclin'd beneath a poplar's shade Pale now those lips where
Rubies hung, And mute the Musick of her Tongue The Roses from her Lips are fled, And
now She dies, and now She's dead! Ye Virgins listen while I sing, Ye Virgins blooming
as the Spring. The Joy of Princeton and the Pride, By my advice I bid ye bide, Of Love
beware; O trust not Love His Dart full oft doth fatal prove. 8

114

Beware of man, of man the most, Who swears you are creation's Boast. Who sighing whispers, how divine, And Flatt'ry breathes in ev'ry Line. But to return I think 'tis time I hate digressions e'en in Rhyme. Come then & listen whilst I tell The Beauties of this charming Belle Tho' that indeed is useless quite Why, tell me Sir, why need I write Of Betsey's Charms, another's pen Already sings them, and what then! Why then, begin in Order due, I hate your unmethodick Crew. Her hair had might in Cupid's eyes He sure would of her Hair make Prize To string his Bow, so soft, so fine, And of the beautifullest shine. Her eyes on which I gaze so oft, Are blue & languishingly soft, Full piercing as the Solar ray, And mild too as the op'ning Day, Her Forehead's polish'd, smooth & eavn, Her Eyebrows like the Arch of Heav'n.

115

Her cheeks are of the Roses Hue, Her Lips sweet as the balmy Dew. Her Lips, no mortal can declare How round, how soft, how sweet they are; Her Lips where all the graces stray, Where all the Loves delight to play. Give me Ambrosia in a Kiss And lap, oh lap my Soul in Bliss. Her Chin, her Neck at once conspire Love to raise, & make the world admire We'll pass unsung her snowy Breast, That Heav'n of Softness & of Rest Sweet as the Rosebud in the Spring, And Soft as down in Cherub's wing— Heav'n with what grace she swims along The envy of the Virgin throng. You'd swear so graceful is her motion Another Venus from the Ocean— *Another Venus!* Oh that Head! The Doctor calls to Bed, to Bed. Another Venus! Pshaw the Devil—Peace, peace, dear angry friend be civil Your Passion is of no avail, It only interrupts my Tale!

116

Modest & candid, soft and mild, Of Temper gentle as a child Of Pity full: the Tears still flow When e'er she hears a tale of Woe. Modestly blushing as the Rose, The color flutters to her nose Ye fair, believe me while I sing, Nor deem it as a trifling thing, Let Modesty adorn your ways, More beauteous tis than Ruby's Blaze—Her temper calm, serene & ev'n As vernal Day, or op'ning Heav'n, Virtue o'er all her thoughts preside, Reason doth all her

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Passions guide—Her Passions like the grateful gale, That fans the Lilly of the Vale, That fans the op'ning rose of May Serves just to keep the Soul in Play Such are her Charms perhaps you'll call, It Fiction, Fancy, Fancy All, Come then th' Original and view, You'll own the Copy Just, & true.

PART III A SATIRE ON BETSEY'S College Suitors

A continuation of "THE BELLE OF PRINCETON"

By WILLIAM PATERSON

119

A SATIRE ON BETSEY'S COLLEGE SUITORS

I'VE grown of late confounded jealous Of the dressy college fellows; E'en (though Betsey let you pass) Of Cook, who is an arrant ass. By this my passion sure I prove, Since jealousy's a sign of love. As on a summer's day you walked With Thalís by your side & talked Of this, & that, & t'other; love, The little urchin, fond to prove His pow'r, resolved was to try, (Tho' from his physiognomy, The god, he could not rightly read, Whether he should or not succeed) How far the most obdurate heart Proof was agt his pow'r of art. Love, in contriving never dull, And of expedients ever full, 120 Impell'd the gentle tim'rous boy, The hour to spend in sport & joy; Plenty of apples were at hand, You each delightful took a stand, He threw at you, and you at him O, the pretty, amorous whim. A philosopher so grave Who'd e'er take him for love's slave. He'd look, joined to a lass so gay, Like January wed to May. Altho' thy charms I dare engage Would thaw the frost of oldest age, And like the sun upon the ice, Would melt & melt it in a trice. Yet do not Betsey throw away Thy beams upon a lump of clay. Smith, tutor Smith, puts in his claim, And proudly hopes you'll fan his flame. Tutor Smith,¹ a lyer so grand

1 Samuel Stanhope Smith was a graduate of the College of New Jersey in 1769. It is recorded he became a tutor at his father's school in Pequea, and returned to his *alma*

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mater in a like capacity in 1770. He married a daughter of Dr. Witherspoon. From 1795 to 1812 he was president of the college.

121

Treads not upon this classic land; Tutor Smith, so wond'rous civil Compound odd of Saint & Devil. This Smith a parson too, alas! He more resembles for an ass. This Smith a parson too, good Heav'ns! Things sure in sixes are & sevens. He looks demure as any nun, Tho' meanest fellow under sun. Oft, very oft, I've smiled to see This booby aim at raillery. E'en Dick he tries to ridicule, Tho' Dick's not half so great a fool. Proud of his learning & his parts The case exact of all upstarts— Proud of his beauty too; I swear He is all lovely & all fair; Proud of his manners, 'tis most true (We must e'en give the dev'l his due) In manners he excels; he came From Pequea,¹ land of wond'rous fame, Where learning, wit, & genius shine, Ecce Signum, I am divine!

¹ Pequea, Lancaster County, Pennsylvania.

122

Sure no good Christian can do less Than help a neighbor in distress: Mark! the conduct of this tutor And who'd have him for a suitor? A house late chanc'd to be on fire, A house it chanc'd to be of Hyer; The bell it rung, the scholars flew, For tell me, who, till then e'er knew On such occasions people stay, Or loiter idly in the way? Slow rises Smith & oped the window The fire to see & how the wind blew: “ *'Tis none of mine* ,” he cry'd amain, Then back to bed he SNEAKED again!

Morgan pretends to love, 'tis true, And fondly hopes to win you too. Morgan a lad well known to fame, For who knows not buck Morgan's name? Morgan a lad well bred & civil, Who smiling sends one to the devil; Morgan, the ladies' dear delight 123 For ever welcome to their sight. Prettiest fellow under sun, So full of Spirit, full of fun. Morgan a lad genteel & neat, He knows the ladies how to seat, Can hand down stairs, or lead to pew, Can give to each fair maid her due, Can reach a glove, or furl a fan, Morgan's sure a gentle man. Morgan can sing, & chat, & dance, Morgan you'd swear was bred in France. He lately liv'd

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with Madam Hornor Whose Amy play'd it in the corner— Whose Sally is a pretty scorner
— But now has changed his situation In hopes they say of an *oration* Tho' Morgan's gay,
genteel, & tall, And at your feet quite low does fall, Yet trust, oh trust not, what he says He
spends in falsehoods half his days, He's full of art & full of wile, And flatters only to beguile.
Armstrong's by fits & starts your lover, But Armstrong is an arrant rover.

124

The gay, the fair, the brown, the lewd, The slattern, coquette, & the prude, By terms, his
youthful thoughts employ By turns, his pleasure & his Joy. He ogles, vows, & swears, &
sighs, Ten thousand, thousand arts he tries The female bosom to inspire, And melt with
all love's fiercest fire. The funeral eulogy On Cæsar & Mark Antony When late he spoke;
the pains, the arts He us'd to touch the ladies' hearts. He tryd, in hopes each breast to
move, To rouse it like a sucking goud, Tho' it resembled more by half, The roaring of a
sucking calf Oh worse than daggers or than swords, So happily he mouth'd his words. He
sob'd & war'd & sob'd till lo! Out came the handkerchiefs, Oh! Oh! The handkerchief, for wt
speakers say, Without can do in the wailing way: The handkerchief, sure sign of woe, Still
used when tears begin to flow; 125 Still used the tearful eye to wipe And make the face of
sorrow bright; The handkerchief: Oh wondrous thing! Can sorrow lay & sorrow bring. The
handkerchief: so great its praise, His tears can lay, our tears to raise You see, dear maid,
how great his art Then *Guard* each pass unto your heart.

PART IV LETTERS on the SUBJECT OF LOVE (“Platonick & Self-love”)

TO AARON BURR *and* HENRY LEE, J R

129

LETTER TO AARON BURR

Princeton Oct 26th 1772.

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DEAR BURR, Our mutual friend Stewart, with whom I spent part of last evening informed me you were still in Eliz-Town. You are much fonder of that place than I am, otherwise you would hardly be prevailed upon to make so long a stay. But perhaps the reason, that I fear it makes you like it. There is certainly something amorous in the very air. Nor is this case any way extraordinary, or beyond belief. I have read (it was in print too) that a flock of birds being on the wing, & bending their flight towards a certain town in Connecticut, dropped down dead just as they were over it. The people at first fairly at a loss to account for this phenomenon in any natural way; however it was at length 9 130 agreed on all hands, that it was owing to the noise-someness of the atmosphere, the small-pox at that time being very rife in the place. I should never have given credit to the report, had it not come from so good a quarter as that of New England. For my part I always drive thro' Eliz-Town as quickly as possible, lest the soft infection should steal upon me, or I should take it in with the very air I breathe.

Yesterday I went to hear Mr Halsey, & then too I saw his young & blooming wife. The old genn. seems very fond of his rib, & in good sooth leers very wistfully at her, as she trips along his side; some allowance however must be made: he is in the vale of life, love is a new thing to him, & the honey moon is not yet over.

"They are amorous & fond of billing, Like Philip & Mary on a shilling."

I have promised to pay him a visit; Stewart or some of the tutors I believe, will accompany me, & I hope you will too. Since commencement I have been at a Dutch wedding, & expect to be at

AARON BURR From a drawing by Albert Rosenthal, after the painting by Gilbert Stuart

131 one or two more very shortly. There was drinking, & singing, and fiddling & dancing. I was pleased extremely; everyone seemed to be in good humor with himself, & this naturally led them to be in good humor with one another.

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When the itch of scribbling seizes me I hardly know when to stop; the fit indeed seldom comes upon me, but when it does though I sit down with design to be short, yet my letter insensibly slides into length & swells perhaps into an enormous size. I know not how it happens, but on such occasions I have a knack of throwing myself out upon paper that I cannot readily get the better of. It is a sign however that I more than barely esteem the person I write to; as I have constantly experienced that my hand but illy performs its office unless my heart concurs. I confess I cannot conceive how I got into so scribbling a vein at present, as it is now past 11 o'clock at night, & besides being on horse the greater part of the day, I intend to start early to-morrow for Philada; there I shall see the races, & the play, and, what is of more value than all, there too I shall see Miss—you know who.

132

The inclosed letter to Spring¹ I commit to your care; I should have sent it before, as I wrote it immediately after you left this place; but I really thought you were in New England long ere now. I know not his address; perhaps he is at Newport, perhaps he is not. If on inquiry you find that the letter is wrongly directed, pray give it an envelope, & superscribe it anew. If he is still at Newport, it would perhaps more readily reach him from N. York than from any part of N. England you may be at. I have said, that if I am mistaken in directing the written letter, you should cover it, and give the proper address. Do, Burr, get somebody, who can write at least a passable hand to back it; for you give your letters such a sharp, slender & lady-like cast, that almost every one on seeing them, would conclude, there was a correspondence kept

¹ Samuel Spring was one of the closest early friends of William Paterson. He was graduated from Princeton in 1771, and during the Revolution joined the Continental army as a chaplain. He was in the severe campaign to Canada under Benedict Arnold. In the annals of Newburyport, Massachusetts, where he preached as a minister of the gospel for nearly half a century, he is one of the most famous figures.

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133 up between my honest friend Spring & some of the female tribe, which might perhaps affect him extremely in point of reputation; as many people suppose that no thing of this kind can be carried on between unmarried persons of two sexes without being tinged with love, & the rather so, since the notion of platonick love is at the present day pretty generally I believe, justly too, exploded. Platonick love is arrant nonsense, & rarely if ever takes place until the parties have at least passed their grand climacterick. Besides, the N. England people; I am told, are odd, inquisitive kind of beings, & when pricked on by foolish curiosity, may perhaps open the letter, which I do not choose should be common to every eye.

You gave me some hopes, that you would see my good friend Reeve before you returned: if you do, make him my respectful compliments, & tell him that I fully designed to write to him, but that business prevented, that laziness hindered, that,—in short tell him anything, so it does not impeach my affection, or lead him to think I have entirely forgot him

Wm. Paterson.

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LETTER TO HENRY LEE, JR.

Princeton Sept 28, 1774

DEAR SIR,

It is now the close of commencement, which you well know to be a day of noise, of bustle & fatigue. But as hurried & as wearied as I am, I cannot forbear writing by so fair an opportunity, though I am really at a loss in what manner to sum up this letter into a decent length. Princeton is quite a barren theme; to count over the exercises of the day would be unentertaining to a person, who has often seen the pomp of parade of a commencement: & to sit down & think what to write next I cannot positively bear; for besides the want of time, it does not run in with my present frame or cast of mind. What then shall I tell you?

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Shall I talk of myself? Self is indeed an object of much love & pleasure, that we are apt to imagine everybody else must be equally delighted with it. Dear, delightful self, which even philosophers dwell

HENRY LEE, JR. From the portrait by J. Herring, after Stuart

135 upon with rapture, notwithstanding all their pretensions to humility, self denial & wisdom.

To talk of one's self in such a manner as to please requires greater art than is to be met with in the bulk of mankind. Vanity is for the most part disagreeable; and what adds to the misfortune is, that not contented merely with laughing at those who are vain, we endeavor to take them down & set them on a level with the rest of the world. We cannot bear that any should be vain but ourselves. This is the reason that coxcombs are for ever bucking against each other. It is a common observation, I believe will in general hold for a true one, that those are the aptest to be puffed up with vanity, who have the fewest good qualities & of course are the least worthy of regard. A man of modesty and merit will never deal out his own praises neither will he ever pass himself forward into the crowd merely to be taken notice of & admired. And yet there is a sort of vanity pleasing enough, though it is rare to be met with and as full as hard to describe. The writings of Montaigne, the celebrated French essayist, abounds with vanity of this kind. Full of himself yet ever agreeable; 136 his very vanity pleases; he dresses it up in such a manner, that even those who are most opposed to the foible can hardly fail of being pleased, & I am sure cannot find it in their hearts to be angry.

Well, Harry, in point of length at least, this letter I think may pass. You see I write what comes uppermost & as Cowley has it, warm from the brain. I hope in this particular you will pattern after me, & set down your thoughts just as they rise.

My best respects wait upon Mr & Mrs Lee. I shall ever hold in grateful memory the civility & politeness with which they treated my brother, & myself.

Inclosed is a copy of our art. of assembly respecting Swine, which Mr Lee desired me to send. The legislature made a law concerning swine in the infancy of the colony, which however I forbore to transcribe, taking the last act to be much better adapted to the present State of Virginia, which I look upon as standing in the same line, in respect of improvement, with the Jersies.

The fever of ague laid hold of me on my way home, however I happily got rid of it in a few days.

I am yours Sincerely Wm. Paterson.

PART V LETTERS BY WILLIAM PATERSON TO VARIOUS GENTLEMEN

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A LETTER TO MR. JOHN DAVENPORT,¹ OF PRINCETON

¹ John Davenport was a native of Southold, Long Island, and was graduated from the College of New Jersey in 1769. William Paterson's letter to him gives us a remarkable incidence of kindness, but we cannot help wondering at the recipient's lack of pride in permitting another to write his graduation essay. From the Paterson papers it would seem that this was almost a custom at the College of New Jersey before the Revolution. At any rate, we know that William Paterson, busy with keeping a general store at New Bromley and studying to be admitted to the bar, found time to write many essays for Princeton students who sought his aid.

New Bromley 10 July 1769.

D SIR:

Inclosed you have the Essay on the Passions, which I promised when last at Princeton. It has lain by me a week or two in Hopes of having an Opportunity to send it, but none has

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offered till now. I wish it was more worthy your acceptance: the Business I am engaged in obliged me to work it off in a Hurry. However as it is not as highly polished 140 as could be wished, the consequence is that you must take the greater pains with it yourself. Recollecting that you was somewhat doubtful whether you would have any addresses at all, I thought it unnecessary to go through them, and therefore stopped short in the one to the Doctor.¹ I confess I could never see the Propriety of giving the parting Compliment, or farewell Song at Examination, and I suppose that, at this day, it has nothing to support it but Custom. However, situated as you are, if you could so contrive it as to make a *general* Adieu, it would not, I think be at all ungraceful. But I do not by any means advise you to go the Round of Compliments usual on such Occasions: this is the peculiar business of the Commencement Orator, and very handsomely closes the Exercises of that Day.

¹ Doctor Witherspoon.

I beg you would be careful of the inclosed Piece, and, when done with it, should be glad you would return it.

I am, D Sir Your affect. Wm Paterson.

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A LETTER TO MR. LUTHER MARTIN,¹ OF MARYLAND

¹ Luther Martin was a native of New Brunswick, New Jersey, and was graduated from the College of New Jersey in 1766. Shortly afterwards he removed to the South, where he taught school until admitted to the bar in 1771. During the Revolution he became attorney-general of the State of Maryland. In 1807 he was one of the counsel to defend Aaron Burr in his trial for treason. Later in his life he again became attorney-general of Maryland, after a lapse of nearly half a century. It is said he was one of the last gentlemen of the old school to wear wrist ruffles and a que in the city of New York, where he died in 1826.

Princeton June 2d 1769.

DE SIR: —

Yours of the 27th May by the Post has just now come to hand, & I assure you met with a hearty Reception. It was exceedingly fortunate that it reached me so soon; had it been a day tardy on its Passage, I should not in all Probability have recd it for some Weeks. I am on the Eve of 142 bidding Adieu to Princeton, & removing a considerable Way into the country, where I shall live mewed up, conversing with none but the Dead. To-morrow I expect to take my departure, & I am therefore really busied in preparing Matters, & getting my Baggage in tolerable Order. However inclinable I am to write a long Letter, yet being greatly straitened for Time, I must necessarily be short. I assure you it would give me real Pleasure could I be of any Service to you; I hope you will make free to call upon me, whenever you think I can. You must be sensible, there is very little circulating cash in the country, which renders it difficult to take up money, tho' the best Security be offered. I know of none about this place who have money to dispose of in this way; tho' is very likely the Part of Jersies I am going to live in may have some monied men. It is as probable a Place as any in the Jersies, & when I name it, believe you will think so yourself—New Bromley, in Hunterdon County, about 30 miles from Princeton, is the place of my intended abode. In that part of the country live wealthy Farmers, many of whom, I am told, have money to put, to 143 use. You may depend upon it, that I shall endeavour all in my Power to procure the Money you want—& to prove Successful would afford me a very particular Pleasure. However I think you had better make diligent Inquiry yourself, & write to those of your friends on whom you can rely to do the Same.

I am, D Sir, in Haste, Your very affect., Wm Paterson

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A LETTER TO THE REV. THEODRICK ROMEYN,¹ OF ULSTER, NEW YORK

1 Theodrick Romeyn was born in New Barbadoes Neck, New Jersey, and was graduated from the College of New Jersey in 1765. He became a minister in the Reformed Dutch

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Church, and towards the close of his life helped to establish Union College. Tradition says he spoke the Holland tongue fluently and often delivered his sermons in that language.

New Bromley, in Hunterdon County August 14th 1770

VERY DR SIR:

You are often in my thoughts and not withstanding it is some time since I have had a letter from you I cannot but say you have still a warm Corner in my Heart. I have often wrote you formerly, but never receiving a Letter from you, save one or two, made me conclude that the far greater Part of mine were unfortunate in their Passage. It is indeed a misfortune under which we both labor, that we live at so unhappy a Distance & in so retired 145 a Corner of the World as almost as to prevent an epistolary correspondence. I asked after you so repeatedly in vain, that I at last gave over making any further inquiry & solaced myself with the pleasing Hope that you were easy quiet & contented. To attain the latter is one of the few things worth a wise man's attention, as it is perhaps the only way of arriving at Happiness here below. And yet small is the number that possesses an easy Competence & still smaller that which enjoys contentment which may well enough be called the sunshine of the Soul. What a stir & Bustle do we make in this Life? One is carried away by Vanity, and another by Ambition; this man is desirous of raising a fortune & that of perpetuating his name. Prejudice blinds us, Self-Interest makes us partial, & the impetuosity of Party-Spirit often makes us ungenerous as well as unjust. The best & worst of Mankind frequently do that, in the Heat of Passion, which they would but condemn in the cool Hour of Reflection. It is well we are mortal; for with desires so craving & Appetites so unbounded were we immortal, what would we not aim at? Cast an attentive look round the World 10 146 & then say whether it does not raise in you either a Smile or a Frown. It is true,

“To laugh, is Want of goodness & of Grace, But to be grave exceeds all Pow'r of Face.”

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I make no scruple to prefer the easy chair of Democritus who laughed at human Life as a continual Farce, to the lonely Cell of Heraclitus who made it the subject of woe & wept at it as a constant Tragedy. When I have a low flow of spirits I call up these two ancient Philosophers, connect the Frolick face with the one, with the Tearful one of the other, which forms a sort of tragic-comic Phiz, and immediately charms away the spleen. You are sometimes as well as myself, a little spleenishly inclined; when therefore you find a Fit of Melancholy coming fast on you, imagine to yourself Democritus laughing ready to split his sides, or Heraclitus whining like a snivelling School-boy and its gone. Remember what the author of the Poem on the Spleen says—

Laugh and be well. Monkeys have been Extreme good Doctors for the Spleen; 147 And Kitten, if the Humor hit, Has Harliquin'd away the Fit. I deem it Heav'n to be serene; Pain Hell & Purgatory, spleen.

You may perhaps have heard, that I am admitted into the Practice, but it is likely you may not have heard where I live. Turn your eyes to the Date of this Letter, & you will see, that New Bromley in Hunterdon County is the place of my abode. When you write me send your letters by the way of Princeton, at which Place (being about thirty miles from this) I am generally once in five or six weeks.

Pray what has become of Stoddard? I think you and he are much alike, for neither of you deem it worth while to answer my letters. If he continues in his old place, you will perhaps have an opportunity of seeing him soon, & if you have, should be glad you would make him my most respectful Compliments.

I am, Dr Sir, Sincerely Your's Wm Paterson.

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A LETTER TO DOCTOR BARNET,¹ OF ELIZABETH-TOWN, NEW JERSEY

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1 Doctor Barnet was perhaps the best known physician of his time in New Jersey. He introduced vaccination into the colony and was famous for his vagaries, many and eccentric. During the Revolution he served as an army surgeon, and was most ardent in his love of freedom.

New Bromley 8th Jany, 1771

DR SIR,

Mrs Barnet, when I had the pleasure of seeing her last, informed me that she intended going to Morris Town some time soon. Not recollecting that I had any particular Business at that Place, I neglected to ask when she designed to set off, though if I had, it is a million to one, whether she could have solved the question, for, I think, it is a Maxim, that a woman don't know her own mind half an hour together. But this under the Rose. I should be fond of an Opportunity of send'g a letter to Morris Town, & therefore beg you will let me know—(for you being her Lord & Master 149 can tell,) whether Mrs Barnet goes this week or not?

Your Company on Friday last would have been very acceptable, & I am really sorry that anything stept in to prevent your attendance. Inclination (I will not say Business, for you will be rough enough not to believe me if I do) leads me in a few day to Princeton, where if you have any commands it will give me Pleasure to execute them.

Mrs Barnet will have it, that court is always at Princeton with me; be it so, I shall not dispute the Matter at Present but I can assure her I have no love suit depending there. Of all the arts of Life I abominate that of Love. It is the saddest thing in the world; it is indeed a disease beyond the Doctor's skill, for I look upon it as absolutely incurable. That I rather (though that is bad enough in all Conscience) swallow the roughest Pill you can make, than be love-sick for a single hour: as to the first give one gulp, & there is an End of it: where as the second by its languishing Softness wholly unmans one. Besides when Love

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once seizes a person it is not easily shaken off: so far from it, that it generally concludes with 150 marriage & is followed by the bitterest of curses a wife, which always lasts till Death. One may with a little alteration say with Sir John Wronghead in the Trip to London “*what a mortal poor Devil is a lover!*”

Nature does wonders at Times & now & then we see a Husband happy in a wife. Woman may indeed be said to be the last best gift, or curse of Heaven.¹

¹ This letter was no doubt written when William Paterson was still suffering from Elizabeth Stockton's rejection of his addresses. Eight years later his views of the female sex had undergone a complete transformation when he gave his heart to “the loveliest & fairest of women,” Cornelia Bell, of Raritan, New Jersey. His letters to her, penned during the Revolution, are among the sweetest and most charming love-epistles preserved in the English language. In a little diary compiled when William Paterson was governor of New Jersey we find recorded:

“William Paterson and Cornelia Bell were married on Tuesday the 9th of Feby 1779, by the Revd. Mr Samuel Blair, a Presbyterian Minister, at the House of Anthony White Esq. at the Union Farm, in the County of Hunterdon.

Present Anthony White Esq. Col. Charles Stewart

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My best Wait upon Mrs Barnet whom I much esteem, though she be a woman; and accept the same from, Dr Sir,

Your obed. hble Sevt. Wm Paterson

P. S. As I may perhaps set off for Princeton before I either see or hear from you, I shall leave the Letter for Morris Town in charge with Berry; so that if Mrs Barnet goes this week, be so good as to send him word & she will forward it to German Town. W. P.

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Thomas Paterson

Edward Paterson

Miss Isabel White

Miss Johannah White

Miss Euphemia White.”

Mrs. Cornelia Paterson died at the close of the Revolution, in the Paterson mansion in New Brunswick, and later in his life William Paterson espoused her friend Euphemia White, who outlived him many years.

PART VI A SENIOR'S LETTER in 1786 TO A GENTLEMAN

“ *Acting a superior part on the Theatre of the World* ”

155

College Princeton July 8th, 1786

DEAR SIR.

An address of this nature will I am thinking appear somewhat extraordinary and be unexpected. I am also fearful that it may be thought forward and unbecoming from me to you. Apprehensions of this kind would create in me a diffidence of the undertaking did not the necessity of my situation and a regard for my own interest together with a more powerful reason than either prompt me to it. I am in hopes you will excuse the liberty I have taken when you are informed of its motives and design. Though you are now acting an eminent and superior part on the more extensive theatre of the world, you no doubt still hold in remembrance that time of your youth which was spent in college in the pursuit of science and in laying the foundation of your present fame & usefulness. The exercises

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of our college must still be known to you. The emulation that subsists among the 156 students. Their exhibitions in public and the advantages of a creditable appearance on all public occasions. Presuming Sir, that these things are within your recollection and relying on your entertainment to literature and on your disposition to aid and encourage those who are engaged in literary pursuits, I am told to entreat your assistance in my favor, to prepare me for my last publick speaking in college the next commencement. On all occasions hitherto I have made trial of my own abilities with a view to my own improvement and avoid being troublesome to others. But as the exercise to which I would solicit your aid appears to me of superior importance, and attended with uncommon difficulties, I distrust my being any way adequate to a suitable preparation and would be scrappy. If (without troubling you too much) I could interest you so much in what concerns me as to engage a few hours of your attention to free me from any present anxiety.

The present Senior class in college of which I am a member consists of about thirty, amongst whom are several excellent speakers who I suppose will take all possible methods to make an appearance 157 in the fall to the greatest advantage—if it were supposed that to do this they relied only on their own Study and ingenuity I should consider it my interest and duty to exert my own powers to be on a level with them. But as it is known that they depend for the most part on the assistance of their friends of greater experience and abilities for their commencement orations there is but little encouragement left for one alone to strive and afterwards experience the mortification of feeling his own inferiority. We are now within a little better than two months of the usual time of commencement. It seems probable that there will be present to our exhibition a large assembly, and perhaps to a young person just entering on the world, his appearance at such a time may be of consequence. These are the reasons that have induced me to write to you in such a manner and on such a subject. I hope at least that they may serve as an apology for my freedom.

If Sir you could do me the favor I ask consistently with your other employments it will be doing me a kindness which will lay me under obligations. But if it should interfere the least

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with 158 your convenience I dare urge my request no longer. I only pray your information that I may know on what to depend, or that I may if possible make application some where else.

As to the subject of it is a matter of indifference to me, your judgment will determine it. We are required to bring in our pieces on the 7th of August for the inspection of the faculty. At that time comes on our last examination, after this we shall be at liberty to return home and spend our six weeks between examination and commencement. The design of the faculty in insisting on our pieces so long before they will be spoke is to prevent disappointments and blunderings. But if you sir should find it inconvenient to help me I pray you do not hurry yourself on that account. Perhaps I may obtain the privilege of a longer time to prepare in. If so if I should receive one time enough to commit it well to memory and exercise myself well in it, it will do.

I know not what to offer in defence of this liberty. You Sir will judge whether the occasion together with the declaration that I do not know to whom I could apply with equal propriety are sufficient to 159 excuse me and at least to acquit the honest intentions of your

Most obedient & Humble Servant Edward Graham. 1

1 Edward Graham was graduated from Princeton in 1786. He was a native of North Carolina, and after leaving college embraced the law as a profession. It is not known whether William Paterson answered his letter, but presumably so, as he never lost his interest in his dearly loved *alma mater*.

PART VII LETTERS Concerning the College Frolics OF THE LAST Patroon of Rensselaerswyck and Others

163

A LETTER FROM WILLIAM PATERSON, THE GRANDFATHER OF STEPHEN VAN RENSSELAER, TO HENRY KOLLOCK, A TUTOR AT THE COLLEGE OF NEW JERSEY

New Brunswick 8th Dec. 1804.

SIR,

Mr Van Rensselaer requests, that you would be so good as to inform him, through me, of the character of Mr Elliot, Stephen's chum; and if he is not very steady and serious, begs that you would endeavor to get him in with some other young gentleman, that is so. Stephen was suffered to remain too long at New York, and has been much indulged. His father is very anxious about him, and particularly, that he should be connected with a studious, regular and moral room-mate, whose manners and exemplary conduct will prove beneficial to him, and facilitate his progress in literature. Excuse this trouble; and believe me to be

Your's Sincerely Wm Paterson

164

A LETTER FROM DR. SAMUEL SMITH, THE COLLEGE PRESIDENT, TO WILLIAM PATERSON

Princeton Decr 27th, 1804

DEAR SIR,

I did not approve the change which young Van Rensalaer [sic] made of his room-mates, & before he made it, I sent for him & told him it must not be done & thought he had desisted from it until more than a fortnight afterwards. With regard to this young gentleman, I must give my candid opinion, that he is as yet, too young, & too volatile & perhaps a little

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too self-willed, to enjoy so much independence as he must necessarily feel in a college where, especially at this age of American liberty, the youngest feels himself on a perfect equality with the oldest. Perhaps, if he were in Brunswick or at Basking-Ridge, under a closer & more immediate inspection, at least where he would have fewer companions & temptations, for one year more it might have a useful effect upon him.

165

I most sincerely wish that, on some plan or other, a new building could be added to the College & occupied entirely in lodging rooms. The students at present are, by far too much crowded for their comfort, & indeed, for the greatest advantage of study & order.

One of our suspended boys of the name of Hart from Kentucky, has been lately making a Christmas frolic among us. The Trustees at their meeting last Spring gave direction to re-admit him into College on certain conditions. Some time in the Summer he returned to Princeton under the pretence of studying—but it was only pretence. He remained in the town; but haunted the College particularly at nights; & for two or three months past has been endeavoring to mislead some of the more thoughtless & idle boys. It was long before his influence was perceptible in any great degree. But, within a little time past, we began to perceive symptoms, of disorder among a few; till, on Christmas eve, always an unlucky time, he induced a number to join him in disturbing the College with a great noise—he fired a pistol three times in the entry, & at length blew up the brick necessary 166 behind it, with gunpowder somehow placed under it, or inserted into the walls. A warrant was issued to apprehend him the next day; but he made his escape into Pennsylvania. We have not been able to discover but one or two of his accomplices. The institution, before this affair, has been remarkably quiet and orderly. But such are the evils to which, for want of power, we are exposed from the residence near us of ill disposed boys who have suffered the censures of the College; & who can find a thousand means secretly to mingle with the worst of the students, & to seduce the inconsistent.—This, with our impotence to control hucksters & taverns are among the greatest evils of which we have to complain.

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With the highest esteem, I am

Dr Sir, Yr mo obdt & hble Sevt. Saml. Smith

167

A SECOND LETTER FROM WILLIAM PATERSON TO HENRY KOLLOCK

New Brunswick 31 Decem. 1804

DEAR SIR,

I availed myself of the hint in your letter of the 27th of this month by writing to young V. R. this day a long letter in the manner you suggested, which, I hope, will not be without effect. I have communicated to his father the Sentiments contained in your letter and that of Doctr Smith; and advised him to caution Stephen against his ruling faults and passions, and to urge him to diligence in his studies, and emulation to excel in morals and in science. Will you be so kind as to keep a watchful eye over him, and to inform me, from time to time, of his general deportment, and his progress in learning. A year or two to come will probably give a cast to the whole course of his life. I am, with great esteem,

Yr ob.dt. Sevt. W P.

168

A LETTER FROM THE FATHER OF STEPHEN VAN RENSSELAER¹ TO HIS FATHER-IN-LAW, WILLIAM PATERSON

¹ The Stephen Van Rensselaer referred to in these letters became the last patroon of feudal land of Central New York. His family was one of the oldest in America, and in their style of living reflected the manners and customs of the English nobility. Before his advent at the College of New Jersey, young Van Rensselaer had taken part in the gay life of New York City at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Strikingly handsome and of a merry temperament, he was a favorite in the exclusive circles of "North River Society" when

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in his early teens. A little over a quarter of a century before his arrival at New Jersey's foremost seat of learning, his father had journeyed to the college as a student, protected from Tories and Indians by a military guard. In striking contrast was the arrival of the son, who came in a chaise, with his black valet and, tradition says, with a wardrobe which was the envy of every man at college.

Jany 7, 1805

DEAR SIR

You can scarcely imagine my distress at reading the extracts of the letter you had the goodness to enclose to my Cornelia. I have been under constant apprehension since I left Stephen at Princeton 169 having till that period been under the eye and *controul* of a Master, lest his conduct on the new scene of a college life should not redound to his credit. I wish to make another experiment before I remove him for which purpose I must beg of you request Mr. Kollock to take him under his care or if possible to board with him. I will with pleasure allow him one hundred pounds pr year. I console myself with the hope that with Mr Kollock's aid he may Still be made a useful member of society. permit me to trouble when at Baltimore to enquire if I could (if necessary to remove my boy) obtain a situation in the French school at that place. Cornelia unites with me in congratulations on the return of a new year to you Mrs P & and all friends.

I am Yours affly S. Rensselaer.

PART VIII SONGS SUNG AT The College of New Jersey IN THE 18 th Century FROM A PATERSON MANUSCRIPT

173

CUPID TRIUMPHANT

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NOW'S the time for mirth and glee, Sing and love and laugh with me, Cupid is my theme of story; 'Tis his godship's fame and glory How all yield unto his law! Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha!

O'er the grave and o'er the gay Cupid takes his share of play; He makes heroes quit their glory; He's the god most fam'd in story; Bending them unto his lay Ha! Ha! Ha! etc.

Sly the urchin deals his darts, Without pity—piercing hearts: Cupid triumphs over passions, Not regarding modes, or fashions, Firmly fix'd is Cupid's law Ha! Ha! Ha! etc.

174

Some may think these lines not true, But they're fact—twixt me and you; Then ye maids and men be wary; How you meet before you marry Cupid's will is solely law. Ha! Ha! Ha! etc.

175

PAUVRE MADELON

COULD you to battle march away, And leave me here complaining, I'm sure t'would break my heart to stay, When you were gone campaigning, Ah non, non, non, pauvre Madelon Would never quit her Rover, Ah non, non, non, pauvre Madelon, Would go with you all the world over

Cheer, cheer, you shall not grieve, A soldier true you'll find me, I could not have the heart to leave My little girl behind me. Ah non, non, non, etc.

And could you to the battle go, To women's fears a stranger No fears my breast will ever know, But where my love's in danger. Ah non, non, non, etc.

176

Then let the world jog as it will Let hollow friends forsake us, We both shall be as happy still, As love and war can make us. Ah non, non, non, etc.

177

JERSEY BLUE

TO arms once more, our Heroines Sedition lives, and order dies, To peace and ease then
bid adieu, And dash to the mountains Jersey Blue.

CHORUS

Jersey Blue. Jersey Blue. And dash to the mountains Jersey Blue!

Since proud ambition rears her head, And murderous rage and discord spread, To save
from spoil the virtuous few, Dash to the mountains Jersey Blue.

Rous'd at the call, with magic sound, The drums and Trumpets circle round As soon the
corps their rout pursues, So dash to the mountains Jersey Blues. 12

178

LULLABY

PEACEFUL slumbring on the ocean, Sailors fear no dangers nigh, The winds and waves
in gentle motion Soothes them with its lullaby Lullaby, lullaby, lullaby, lullaby, Soothes
them with its lullaby.

Is the wind tempestuous blowing? Still no danger they descry—The guileless heart its
boon bestowing Soothes them with its lullaby Soothes them with its lullaby.

179

ROGER

NOW Roger I'll tell thee, since thou art my son, A Council I'll give thee for life— Put on thy
best clothes, and thy fine yellow hose And I'll warrant thee I get thee a wife, thee will.

CHORUS

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Yes thee will, so thee will And I warrant thee I get thee a wife, thee will.

Now as he was mounting and taking his leave To leave his dear mother behind, It grieved his heart to think he should part, And leave his dear mother behind, it did. Yes it did, etc.

180

The first that young Roger attempted to view Was the parson's fair daughter named Grace He'd scarcely spoke but a word, or two And she hit him a slap in the face, she did. Yes she did, etc.

If this be the way of getting a wife, Says Roger I'll ne'er seek another, I'd rather live single all the days of my life, And so I'll go home to my mother, I will. Yes I will, etc.

181

SONG

THEY call me honest Harry O; Molly I will marry O; In spite of Nell Or Isabelle, I'll follow my own vagary O; With my rigdum, jigdum arry O; I love little Molly O; In spite of Nell Or Isabelle I'll follow my own vagary O.

Straight she is, and bonny O; Sweet she as sugar candy O, Fresh and gay As flowers in May, And I'm her Jack a dandy O; With my rigdum, jigdum, etc.

182

Soon to church I'll bring her O; Where we'll wed together O, And that done Then we'll have fun In spite of wind or weather O; With my rigdum, jigdum, etc.

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